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*Mayor Cermak*

# THE UNDERWORLD OF AMERICAN POLITICS

*By*  
FLETCHER DOBYNS



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## PREFACE

IN THE fall of 1927, Mr. William G. McAdoo addressed a letter to Mr. George F. Milton, editor of *The Chattanooga News*, in which he announced that he would not be a candidate for the Democratic nomination for President of the United States. In that letter he said: "My chief concern is the supremacy of Democratic principles and progressive policies, for these mean the preservation unimpaired of the Constitution of the United States; the suppression of nullification and the enforcement of law, without which stable government is impossible, and without which the blessings of liberty will disappear."

Commenting on this statement, Mr. Milton said:

Apparently we are about to see a prosecution of a brazen attempt on the part of the underworld of American politics to dominate, control, and debase a party made glorious by the patriotic achievements and lofty ideals of Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Grover Cleveland, and Woodrow Wilson.

The platform adopted by the Democratic National Convention of 1932 was dictated by

the delegations from states in which cities exert a powerful political influence. One of the largest and most influential of these was the delegation from Illinois. A study of the forces that selected and controlled this delegation should, therefore, throw light upon the question of whether or not the attempt of which Mr. Milton speaks was finally successful in the Chicago Convention.

That Tammany Hall has organized the forces of vice, graft, and privilege into an invincible political machine which governs the city of New York for the personal profit of its members is well understood. We are, however, only vaguely aware of the fact that other cities have their Tammany Halls that rule and rob them and dominate and degrade the politics of the states in which they are located. The power of these predatory organizations is steadily increasing, and they are becoming more and more closely allied in the pursuit of a common purpose.

Chicago and Illinois are in the iron grip of such a political machine which is as corrupt, as ruthless, and as efficient as Tammany Hall of New York. It has assumed a position of aggressive leadership of the allied Tammany organizations of the country and is a perfect exemplification of the objects and methods of

these sinister forces that are intent on establishing at the National Capitol the type of government that has made our cities a reproach to American civilization.

This book tells the story of the origin, development, and triumph of this machine—of Chicago's Tammany Hall.

That it might be clear that I am not presenting a purely individual point of view, I have frequently quoted the statements and opinions of other men whose authority to speak on the questions involved is generally recognized. This is, however, a narrative of struggles in which I participated and of events of which I was an eyewitness. For nearly thirty years I took an active part in the political life of Chicago and watched at close range the developments and relentless advance of this machine. During more than ten years of this period, I was engaged in the prosecution of criminal cases as a member of the staff of the State's Attorney of Cook County, the Attorney-General of Illinois, the United States District Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, and the Attorney-General of the United States. I also acted as counsel for the City Crime Commission appointed by Mayor Harrison in 1914.

As a result of these experiences, I have



frequently been called upon to discuss the causes of crime in Chicago before bar associations, colleges, clubs, and other organizations. This book is a response to the many requests I have received to put my material in such form that it might reach a wider audience.

I found that to make this book acceptable to publishers, it would be necessary to eliminate certain statements and tone down others. That I may have complete freedom of expression, I am publishing it myself.

## INTRODUCTION

TOWARD the close of the last century, Anton J. Cermak, a Bohemian immigrant of peasant origin, left the coal mines of Illinois, where he had been employed, went to Chicago and obtained a job as a brakeman on a railroad. He found his way into politics, was elected to the legislature, the City Council, bailiff of the Municipal Court, president of the County Board, and by 1929 he had become the head of the Democratic organization of Cook County and the possessor of a large private fortune. In 1930, his candidate for the United States Senate, J. Hamilton Lewis, was elected by a majority of 750,000. In 1931, Cermak was elected Mayor of Chicago by the largest majority ever given a candidate for that office. In the primary of 1932, he entered candidates for governor, United States senator, and other state offices and delegates to the Democratic National Convention. His slate was ratified by the voters.

With a confidence born of these victories and a consciousness of the fact that he would control the third largest delegation in the National Convention, a delegation from a

state that was of great strategic importance to his party, he went to New York to confer with John F. Curry, head of Tammany Hall. The subject of this conference was who should be the Democratic nominee for president of the United States. At its conclusion, he issued a public statement in which he told the Democrats of the nation the type of man they must nominate for that high office, and assured them that such a candidate would receive the electoral vote of Illinois.

Under his dictation the Democratic Party of Illinois adopted a platform which contained a plank demanding the unconditional repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment and the immediate modification of the Volstead Act. He caused this plank to be submitted to the Committee on Resolutions of the Democratic National Convention and exerted an influence second in importance only to that of Tammany Hall of New York in securing its adoption by the committee and the convention. When Governor Roosevelt had accepted this plank without reservation, Cermak at the critical moment delivered the vote of the Illinois delegation to him, thus insuring his nomination. When Roosevelt reached Chicago after his spectacular flight from Albany, he was received by Cermak, who con-

ducted him to the Stadium and delivered him triumphantly to the waiting convention. At the close of the convention, it was apparent that Cermak was one of the most powerful and resourceful leaders of the Democratic Party of the United States.

He did not reach the position of power which he now occupies by virtue of a military record, an engaging personality, persuasive oratory, knowledge of political and economic questions, or by conspicuous public service. He followed the route of the machine politician. Soon after reaching Chicago, he joined a group of men who were engaged in building a political machine after the model of Tammany Hall of New York. They organized the denizens of the underworld and their patrons, political job holders and their dependents and friends, those seeking special privileges and immunities, and grafters of every type; they engaged in political sabotage and entered into bipartisan deals and alliances. By these methods they gained control of the Democratic organization, helped to deliver the Republican Party and the City of Chicago into the hands of William Hale Thompson, Robert E. Crowe, Charles V. Barrett and their allies, and finally gained control of all the local governments within the

limits of Cook County. The foundation of Cermak's power is the fact that he is boss of this organization.

As he and his associates have captured one office after another, and their organization has risen to power, Chicago has sunk to the depths of insolvency, political corruption, lawlessness, and crime. Cermak is, therefore, not only one of the most powerful, but one of the most sinister and portentous figures in the political life of America. To understand his success is to understand Chicago's failure and the reason why American cities are becoming a menace to American institutions.

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## *Chapter One*

### CHICAGO AS IT IS

#### *The Underworld*

"SCARFACE AL" CAPONE sat in his grand headquarters in Chicago. The doors opened and past the heavily armed guards moved the venerable figure of Frank J. Loesch, counsel for the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, president of the Chicago Crime Commission, and member of the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement. He had come by appointment and secretly to present to the all-powerful chief a humble petition that the people of Chicago be permitted to select their own State's Attorney—the official whose first and most imperative duty would be to hang Capone and every member of his gang. Mr. Loesch himself has given a vivid account of this audience, in an address which he delivered before the Southern California Academy of Criminology:

It did not take me long after I had been made president of the Crime Commission to discover that Al Capone ran the city. His hand reached into every department of the city and county



government. I have not made this known before, but I made arrangements to secretly meet Mr. Capone in his headquarters.

When I reached there, I found him in an office-like room, with a half dozen of his non-English-speaking guards standing with their hands on their guns. Over Mr. Capone's desk hung three oil portraits. They represented George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and "Big Bill" Thompson!

That alone was enough to flabbergast me, but I got down to business with Capone immediately. I was concerned about the election that was then about to be held for State's Attorney and a number of other important city and county offices.

He asked me what I wanted, and I told him about my concern over the coming election. This arch criminal then had the effrontery to tell me that he would give me a square deal if I did not ask too much of him. I then said to him: "Now look here, Capone, will you help me by keeping your damned cutthroats and hoodlums of the North Side from interfering with the polling booths?"

"Sure," he said, "I'll give them the word because they are all dagoes up there, but what about the Saltis gang of micks over on the West Side? They'll have to be handled different. Do you want me to give them the works too?"

I was overpleased with Capone's apparent willingness to help over on the West Side, and I expressed myself as being grateful.

"All right," he said, "I'll have the cops send

over the squad cars the night before the election and jug all the hoodlums and keep 'em in the cooler until the polls close."

I can tell you folks that it was a grateful handshake that I gave him at this proposition, and on the specified day seventy police cars were used to jug the hoodlums.

It turned out to be the squarest and most successful election day in forty years. There was not one complaint, not one election fraud and not one threat of trouble all day. What is the answer to that?

The police know Capone's guards with their pockets bulging with ready automatics. They could arrest them but they don't. Capone is just one example. When he is taken off, another who is just as efficient will step into his place.

That the people had found it necessary to organize a Crime Commission is evidence that the law-enforcing agencies of the city and State were not functioning properly. That the president of that Commission knew that it would be useless to appeal to the Mayor, the Chief of Police, the State's Attorney or the Sheriff to prevent "hoodlums and cutthroats" from controlling the election of a State's Attorney shows that these officials were dominated by the criminal elements of the city. That he realized that this "arch criminal" was the only man who had the

power to prevent a reign of terror and permit the people to cast their votes without being molested is still more persuasive proof of that fact. That the police knew who and where the "hoodlums and cutthroats" were and could send out seventy squad cars to "jug 'em and keep 'em in the cooler" until the polls closed, and that Al Capone was the only man who could order them to take such action, showed the extent to which criminals ruled Chicago. That Capone should choose to give this exhibition of his power in connection with the election of the public prosecutor shows a supercilious contempt for law that could be born only of a consciousness that the better elements of the city had been reduced to helplessness and that organized crime was triumphant.

The orderly election and the success of the candidate in whom Mr. Loesch was interested created not a ripple of excitement in Chicago's gangland. It was understood that whatever his intentions might be, he would be powerless. Capone knew this when he agreed to permit the people to elect him.

A dramatic incident that occurred in October, 1931, revealed as by a flash of lightning the power and the technique of the Capone organization. With supreme audacity it had

established its headquarters in the Lexington Hotel, which was almost in sight of the City Hall and the Federal Building. It took several entire floors of this hotel and refurnished them on a lavish scale, stocked them with rare wines and liquors, purchased the most expensive articles of food, engaged a famous chef, and there in the midst of oriental splendor the chief and his braves lived in a manner worthy of their power and their royal revenues. There they conducted their business, from there they established their brothels, gambling houses, dog races, breweries, distilleries and speakeasies and gave orders to their panderers, dope sellers, bootleggers, rum runners, smugglers, hi-jackers, racketeers, and gunmen. It was there that they issued their orders for the wholesale murder of the rival gangsters who were trying to "muscle into" their territory. It was there that they matured their plans to control elections, overawe politicians and public officials, bribe and intimidate policemen, judges, and other officers of the law.

So great was their power that all crimes committed by them were ignored or reported by the police as "unsolved." If by mistake one of their number was arrested, Capone gunmen appeared in open court, made their

presence known and immediately witnesses forgot everything, bailiffs, jurors, and judges became nervous, and a dismissal or a verdict of "not guilty" soon followed. Their assassins carried cards issued to them by the Police Department for their protection in cases of emergency. They did not evade the law. They were superior to it.

This insolent gang had conducted its criminal operations at these headquarters openly while William Hale Thompson was Mayor, and it had done precisely the same thing with absolute immunity for six months under the administration of Mayor Cermak. Policemen, State's Attorneys, judges, and powerful citizens passed by the Lexington Hotel daily and not a challenge was issued.

Finally, in 1931, the Federal Government indicted Capone for income tax evasion. When the trial started, an effort was made to terrorize the Federal Court by the method that had proved so effective in the local courts. A Capone gunman, by the name of Philip d'Andrea, walked into the courtroom, sat down behind his chief and, by the usual tactics, informed witnesses, jurors, and the court that it was the command of the gang that they follow the same course and make the same

cowardly surrender that had become a matter of routine in the courts of Chicago. Judge James H. Wilkerson holds a life position and is beyond the reach of politics, and he is an unusually intelligent, honest, and courageous man. Instead of running up a white flag, he ordered the arrest of D'Andrea and charged him with contempt of court.

When he was searched, it was found that he was armed with a .38 caliber revolver and extra ammunition. He also had the star of a deputy bailiff of the Municipal Court, a card of the Illinois Police Association reading as follows:

ILLINOIS POLICE  
ASSOCIATION

This is to certify that

PHILIP L. D'ANDREA

is entitled to the courtesy of Police Departments and when extended to him will be highly appreciated by this Association.

Expires December 31, 1930.

JAMES E. CORCORAN,  
*President.*

and the following card issued by the West Park Police Department:

DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

WEST CHICAGO PARK COMMISSIONERS  
1931

TO POLICE OFFICERS:

You will extend courtesies of this department to the bearer

PHILIP L. D'ANDREA

---

No. 144

---

WM. SCHRAMM,

---

*Captain of Police.*

But most amazing of all was a written request from a police officer that he be transferred to the detective bureau.

In pronouncing sentence on D'Andrea, Judge Wilkerson said:

The specific act upon which the proceeding is based was that of coming before the court in company with the defendant in the case of the United States *vs.* Capone with a revolver and ammunition in his pocket.

Now it clearly appears from the facts and circumstances before the court in this proceeding and at the trial of United States *vs.* Capone, that this respondent's activities were linked with those of an organized body of men whose outlaw camp is at the Lexington Hotel.

Of this body, defendant Capone was chief. The respondent claims that he did not know what this band was doing, but his understanding is that they are engaged in gambling and bootlegging.

It is perfectly clear from a long array of conclusive circumstances that this band exercises a coercive influence over those with whom it comes in contact, which is nothing less than insurrection against the laws of the United States.

The court would have been blind indeed if it had not observed the intimidation practiced upon witnesses almost under the eyes of the court. It must be borne in mind that this respondent was sitting with his concealed firearm behind the defendant (Capone), while defendant was glaring at witnesses who were on the point of remembering something about the business in which the defendant was engaged and which the witnesses could not possibly have forgotten; yet witnesses faltered and failed at the critical point.

To this camp at the Lexington were summoned the witnesses who testified to the defendant Capone's losses on horse races. To that camp were summoned counsel for conferences. And from that camp, under what coercive influences we can only conjecture from what transpired in court, came that array of shocking perjury with which the court was confronted during the closing days of the trial.

We had here the spectacle of witness after witness testifying in a way which was psychologically impossible, pretending to remember things which, in the very nature of the human mind, the witness could not have remembered if he had forgotten the things which he pretended to have forgotten. It was perjury on its face.

The activities of this band were a menace to



the court, and its officers and to the due administration of justice.

The real significance of the prosecution of Capone by the Federal Government for income tax evasion was expressed in an editorial in *The Washington* (D. C.) *Star* as follows:

The shame is that Chicago has not caught this brigand in its own legal net and long since sent him to his deserved punishment. The shame is that the State of Illinois has not handled the case of a common felon. The shame is that the law has failed utterly to cope with the creature whose hirelings have slain and robbed and mutilated offenders against his own bandit rule. No matter how satisfactory will be the eventual incarceration of Capone in a federal prison for the failure to make an income tax return, as a technical means to the end of getting him in jail, there will remain the sense that the law has failed.

His removal will have no effect upon the power and efficiency of his organization for, as Mr. Loesch says, "Capone is just one example. When he is taken off, another who is just as efficient will step into his place."

In March, 1932, Edward J. Brundage, former Corporation Counsel of Chicago and for eight years Attorney-General of Illinois, stated that an organization of criminals, of

which Al Capone was the head, was threatening to take control of Chicago. He said:

Under skillful hands a syndicate of criminals has grown until it threatens to take political control of our city. It has almost got it now. Vice of every form is within its organized grasp. The leaders of some labor organizations are subservient.

This business corporation will not discontinue because Capone, its chief, has been sent to prison. Others will take his place and the business of electing aldermen, legislators, and ward committeemen will continue. It gives them power, the influence and the protection necessary to keep going.

The danger to Chicago can be ended in one election if law-abiding citizens will arouse themselves and vote. If they continue to remain indifferent, the picture I have presented will become a full reality. A few finishing touches and it will be complete.

Under a foolish law the county committee, sitting as a convention, nominates the judges of our Circuit and Superior courts. What the Capone syndicate is aiming for in the primaries is the election of its candidates for ward committeemen.

If it gets a majority, the criminal syndicate will be able to name the judicial candidates—select the men to try them if decency ever brings them to trial.

This is no idle statement. Ward committee-

men are what Capone wants. The complaints of registration frauds are well founded. The Forty-second Ward is one of the wards where the gang expects to elect a committeemen.

Gangsters, not shabby bums, but slick, well-clad fellows, travel from one ward to another getting their names on the registration books under the guidance of local politicians. Thousands of illegal votes are cast while good citizens remain away from the polls.

In April, 1932, Rush E. Butler, a leading lawyer of Chicago and former president of the Illinois Bar Association, filed a petition in the Criminal Court asking that a special grand jury be impaneled to investigate criminal conditions in the city. In granting the petition, the court said:

The invisible government that has been established in Cook County in recent years requires impartial and honest investigation. Gangland exacts not only enormous profits from the illicit sale of liquor, but vice, gambling, and prostitution are flourishing in this great city and county of ours to a degree never before equaled. Such conditions could not exist were the State's Attorney and other law-enforcing agencies of the city and county alert and anxious to discharge their public duties.

Some of the legitimate labor unions that ought to be supported by public opinion are being sub-

jected to terrorism by gangsters who seek control by the murder of the decent officials selected by the law-abiding members of the union or by means of terrorism and intimidation. Employers are being deprived of the right to control their own business or obliged to pay tribute to these gangsters.

Kidnapings for ransom are of frequent occurrence; bombings are greatly on the increase; motion picture theaters filled with women and children have been targets for these bombs. So bold are these racketeers, and so gruesome are their operations, that they have interfered in the decent, orderly burial of our dead.

Public pay rolls continue to be padded, particularly on the eve of a primary election, when every municipality in Cook County is financially distressed, and the honest employees, including the school teachers, firemen, policemen, employees of the Health Department and others whose work is essential to the well being of the city and county, are unpaid, and while the bonds of the municipalities are in default.

The situation may be summarized in the somber language of the report of the Citizens' Police Committee. This committee, which was composed of forty-eight of the most prominent citizens of Chicago, in its report said:

Criminal justice in Chicago has come to be a symbol. By common consent it stands as a per-

fect example of civic failure and official corruption. . . . In 1928 a special grand jury declared the Chicago Police Department to be "rotten to the core," and another more recently has announced that its investigations disclosed the existence of a well-established, three-cornered alliance between the Police Department, the corrupt politicians, and the criminal element. The natural and inevitable result of that alliance takes the form of hoodlums, gangs and rackets, with organized prostitution, syndicated gambling, beer wars, bomb terrorism, kidnaping and extortion, the exploitation of legitimate business, and control over the ballot box and the agencies of criminal justice—all linked together in one vast conspiracy. The distinguishing mark of this alliance is murder on a large scale.

A conservative analysis conducted by the Citizens' Police Committee now shows a total of two hundred fifty-seven murders as the direct result of gang competition and activity during the seven years from 1923 to 1929. In common with previous analyses, the appended table shows that no convictions for gang murders were secured during this seven-year period. What is even more significant, it indicates that in ninety per cent of the cases no solution was effected by the police. . . .

While this farce is being played, the official police list of prominent gangsters against whom vagrancy charges are to be filed is found in the possession of a Capone bondsman; warrants for the arrest of so-called "big shots" are lost for weeks, then reappear and are distributed for

execution without comment. Oppression, futility and corruption—corruption everywhere!<sup>1</sup>

### *The Upper World*

Populous and efficient as the underworld is, it could not wield the influence it does if it were not for its financial and political alliance with the inhabitants of Chicago's upper world. The vast sums of money which gangsters use to control elections and bribe public officials are poured into their hands by the patrons of gamblers, prostitutes, dope sellers, bootleggers, smugglers, and racketeers. Gangsters, job hunters, from mayor to day laborer, and grafters, from millionaire social leaders seeking franchises, contracts and escape from taxation, down to the pettiest parasites, are organized into an invincible political army, the object of which is to elect public officials who will permit each of its members to carry on his particular racket unmolested. The deal is that the underworld shall have a "liberal government" and a "wide open town" and its upper world allies shall be permitted to plunder the public treasury and appropriate wealth belonging to the people.

Civic organizations, grand juries, and the

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<sup>1</sup> Citizens' Police Committee, *Chicago Police Problems*, pp. 1, 3, 4, 7. University of Chicago Press.

press have repeatedly exposed the graft and corruption that exists in connection with every government within the limits of Cook County. So powerful is the system that all efforts to correct the situation prove futile and the people accept it as a matter of course.

Two recent court proceedings, while they will not affect the system, do give the uninitiated citizen a peep behind the scenes. The Sanitary District was organized to dispose of the sewage of Chicago, and its officials belong to the city's corrupt political system. As a result of the determined efforts of Frank J. Loesch and Assistant State's Attorney John E. Northup, the president of the district and certain other officials were indicted and convicted. In pronouncing sentence on the defendants, the court said:

. . . For nearly two months we sat here and listened to more than seven hundred witnesses. I shall not attempt to sum up the evidence at all, but in a general way these witnesses, one after the other, told stories in which they themselves were implicated of hideous corruption, prevalent in a public office created by the legislature whose main function it is to provide for the sanitation and guard the health of the community.

From all walks of life these witnesses came: carpenter and tailor, preacher and lawyer, legislators, male and female, white and black, all tell-

ing the same monotonous tale, that without ever rendering one dollar's worth of employment to the community they regularly, week after week, for a period running wellnigh one and a half years have been drawing upon the public funds; not satisfied with receiving their checks, a scheme was evolved by which expense moneys which had never been incurred were being paid to them by the district running into vast sums of money.

Perhaps one of the saddest situations pictured in the trial before us was that phase of it which portrayed a legislative body, in fact, both houses of the legislature, whose duty it was from time to time to pass on legislation affecting this public municipality, receiving from the coffers of that municipality vast sums of money, by themselves going upon the pay roll or by members of the family or favorite friends being put upon it, without ever rendering one dollar's worth of service.

But that was only a part of the despicable situation that prevailed in the municipality. Dummy corporations were organized for the purpose of dealing solely with the corporation, this municipal corporation; and not satisfied with the advantages they had by being preferred in the letting of contracts or the making of purchases upon which enormous profits might be had, overcharges were made running anywhere from ninety to seven hundred per cent.

One vast project, the building of a bridle path, the testimony shows could have been accomplished at the expenditure of from three to four



hundred thousand dollars, yet a million and sixty odd thousand dollars was spent for that. Contractors have been paid twice for the performance of the same work. In fact, so much has been shown which remained unanswered and unexplained that there was not a moment's hesitation on our part in reaching the conclusion that there was established by the evidence the existence of a huge conspiracy, as a result of which large sums of money had been corruptly and unlawfully taken out of the treasury of the sanitary district.

For more than thirty years the most powerful instrument of graft and political blackmail in Chicago has been the Board of Review of Cook County. The original assessment of property for taxation was made by the Board of Assessors consisting of five members, but final jurisdiction was vested in the Board of Review. It had the arbitrary power to increase, diminish, or remit all taxes. The existence and value of real estate could not be concealed, but there is approximately \$16,-000,000,000 worth of personal property in Cook County, and it has been in connection with the fixing of the taxes on property of this kind that the politicians have collected millions of dollars of graft and forced citizens to give them active support or to become political neutrals.

Early members of the Board of Review used their power to fix taxes as a means of increasing their business and fortifying their political positions. Very soon, however, this power was taken over by the political machines, of which the board members were mere creatures, and while these members, as contractors, bankers, or lawyers, continued to get their personal graft and use their position to strengthen their political fences, it was but a drop in the bucket when compared to the sums collected and the power exerted by the machines. One of the principal sources of the strength of the bipartisan system that has cursed Chicago in recent years has been the desire of the bosses of both parties, through the exchange of favors, to "take care" of the taxes of themselves and their friends.

Finally this fraudulent system of fixing taxes not only helped to bankrupt the city, but it became so oppressive to those who were not its beneficiaries that there was a taxpayers' rebellion, and the whole matter was aired in open court. On January 31, 1931, Judge Jarecki, after an exhaustive hearing, held that the 1928 and 1929 tax levies were void on the ground that so much personal property had been unlawfully exempted from taxation that it amounted to a fraud upon the owners

of real estate. In his opinion, the judge said:

It has been shown that the real estate in this county, in the years 1928 and 1929, has been assessed at \$9,300,000,000, and by the 37 per cent factor reduced to the assessed value in 1928 to \$3,336,231,768 and in 1929 to \$3,431,242,182; and that personal property has been assessed in 1928 in this county as valued at \$779,066,120, and in 1929 as valued at \$751,660,785. It has also been shown that the personalty has not been reduced by any equalizing factor, but was placed on the books as reported at its full value.

Further in the evidence it has been shown that there is in Cook County personal property to the extent of \$16,000,000,000.

If there is \$9,300,000,000 worth of real estate in Cook County and \$16,000,000,000 worth of personalty, then barely one-third of the property has been listed for taxation. But admitting that in the \$16,000,000,000 worth of personalty, some of it may be exempt from taxation, some perhaps cannot be located; at any rate barely one-half of the taxable property of Cook County has found its way into the assessment roll. The other half has been willfully and intentionally left off the roll. Can it be maintained that an assessment so flagrant, so reeking with fraud, can be held to be a good roll?

Not until this case has fraud been shown, but the evidence as to it has poured in here like a blizzard that blocked every avenue of escape. . . .

For many years last past the Board of Asses-

sors arbitrarily and deliberately removed hundreds of millions of dollars of taxable personal property from the assessment rolls of the county. This conduct was known to and acquiesced in by the Board of Review. For 1928 and 1929, and many years prior thereto, the Board of Review arbitrarily, fraudulently, and deliberately refused to assess personal property which had been omitted by the Board of Assessors.

At the same time that the papers were announcing that one of the sixteen hundred independent governing bodies of Metropolitan Chicago<sup>2</sup> had in a short time given \$2,363,600 of the taxpayers' money to grafters, and that \$15,000,000,000 of property had been fraudulently exempted from taxation, they were also announcing that Chicago was bankrupt, that it could not borrow a dollar, that its paper was refused by banks and individuals, that its teachers had not been paid for months and were borrowing from their friends to pay their rent and grocery bills, that schools were being closed and that the mayor had recommended the saving of \$6,345,740 by discharging 2,479 city employees. The list which was submitted of those to be discharged included every police sergeant, 572 in number, and

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<sup>2</sup> See *Chicago, a More Intimate View of Urban Politics*, p. 91, by Charles Edward Merriam.

every battalion chief of the Fire Department. With his recommendation, the mayor submitted the following pregnant question: "What's the use of keeping them if you know you can't pay them?"

### *The Press*

Adding to the hopelessness of the situation is the fact that certain of its daily newspapers, having the largest circulation and exerting the most powerful influence, are integral parts of this corrupt system. They pander to the ignorance, appetites, and prejudices of the underworld and its patrons; they distort the news; they publish half truths and falsehoods; they foster a fierce resentment against all efforts to curb cupidity, appetite, and lust in the interest of social health and public decency; they sneer at the law and those who uphold it, and they incite in the mob a spirit of contempt for law and an important disregard for the obligations which it imposes. While they are doing these things to multiply the number of their subscribers, they are securing financial support and advertising by ignoring or justifying the corrupt alliance between business and politics, the object of which is the purchase and sale of govern-

mental favors. Under cover of high-sounding words and phrases, they oppose and denounce or support and eulogize the corrupt political bosses, as their selfish interests dictate, while those who are struggling intelligently and courageously to redeem the city are subjected to a daily bombardment of sneers, vilification, and abuse. They parade their opposition to old-fashioned crimes of violence and solemnly demand petty and futile changes in criminal law and procedure, but they ignore or justify crimes by which the underworld is financed and rendered politically supreme and the system by which criminals and grafters control the government of the city. By these methods, they create an atmosphere in which cupidity, vice and lawlessness can strut with insolent self-assurance, but in which true civic pride and patriotism sinks down defeated and overwhelmed.

### *Chicago as the World Sees It*

The matured judgment of the world outside of Chicago has been well expressed in an editorial in the *Los Angeles Times*:

THE DECLINE OF CHICAGO: Americans are witnessing in Chicago one of the worst symptoms of the worst disease that can afflict any American

community. It might appropriately be termed a pernicious anemia of Americanism. . . .

When one takes toll of the winked-at lawless acts, the millions paid for tribute, the pall of panic enveloping scared industries under the threat of gangster outrages, the corruption and imbecility of courts and officials which have drained her treasury, the reign of the racketeer, the bloody trails left by disregarded murders, for ten years running riot on the shores of Lake Michigan, one hesitates even to call American the once-proud metropolis of the Middle West. . . .

Every virtue, every characteristic, every bred-in-the-bone principle that brought America its independence and welded it into a powerful nation appear totally lacking in civil government of Chicago as it exists under the domination and by the sufferance of the gangster and the racketeer. . . .

What position should be assigned Chicago in the procession of communities celebrating next month the birthday of George Washington? Surely the smallest village, the most inconsequential hamlet, where American laws are respected and American virtues are still preserved, deserves a higher place in our national parade than a great city which subserviently crouches before the throne of the Italian bootlegger, the criminal gangster and the union racketeer.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *The Los Angeles Times*, January 24, 1932.

*Chicago and the City Problem*

We are accustomed to think of the problem of the city as local in character and of special importance only to its own citizens. Nothing could be further from the truth, for it is rapidly becoming a national problem of major importance. The corrupt bosses and newspapers of the cities are endeavoring with the utmost vigor and arrogance to extend their power to the states and to the nation itself. Already a number of states have become infected by the virus from their cities and are dangerously diseased. They are thrusting upon the national stage orators and office seekers through whom the despoilers of cities seek to get control of the government of the United States and its revenues. While those subservient creatures seek by pompous verbiage and specious logic to give to their selfishness and their moral taint the aspect of virtue and superiority, the initiated know that this is mere camouflage and that their stand on public questions is determined by their desire to secure the support of the bosses and newspapers of the city and the vote of its underworld.

Nations have been afflicted by famine, pestilence, economic wrongs, tyranny, internal strife, and foreign wars, and retained their



health and vitality. But no nation has ever survived the moral degradation and decay following the seizure of its government by the ruthless representatives of the appetites, passions, and lawlessness of the underworld, the ignorance and prejudices of the mob and the greed, lust for power and contempt for law of the upper world, and the removal of all restraint upon vice and public exploitation. This is what is happening in our cities, and they must be regenerated or isolated if our institutions and our civilization are to survive. The most important task, therefore, that confronts American patriotism and statesmanship is to prevent the nation from succumbing to the disease that afflicts its cities.

If the people are to deal successfully with this problem, they must know the facts. This is a matter of great difficulty not only for the outside world but for those residents of cities whose only political activity consists in going to the polls and voting the Republican or Democratic ticket. They learn of murders, scandals, and other surface phenomena, but they know little of the nature and workings of the volcanic forces beneath. The story of Chicago's downfall reveals those subterranean forces in action.

## Chapter Two

### THE WARFARE OF THE BOSSES

#### *An Ancient Example*

WITH the close of the Punic Wars, Rome had achieved such strength that control of her government paved the way to vast wealth and power. As a result, a horde of avaricious and unscrupulous politicians entered upon a desperate struggle for supremacy. They had none of the old Roman virtue, patriotism, or desire to serve the state. They sought office in order that they might plunder the provinces and gratify their greed, their appetites, their lusts, and their inordinate vanity. Every schoolboy knows the list—Marius, Sulla, Cinna, Crassus, Verres, Cataline, Cethegus, Pompey, Cæsar. They bribed the voters with entertainments, feasts, and money, but as time went on they placed their chief reliance on the mercenary armies which they organized and held together by the promise of public plunder. By means of these armies, they disfranchised the people and elevated themselves to power. The people ceased to choose their rulers and the government passed into

the hands of the politician who had the strongest army. Referring to this period, Merivale says:

We have now reached a turning point in the history of Rome at which the civic institutions begin to be overshadowed by the military organization. Hitherto the annual magistrates, legally elected, have ruled the state; the laws have been framed by the people in their comitia, by the Optimates in the senate. These have been the prevailing forces in the commonwealth. But they are fast hastening to their fall, and their place is to be taken by a successful soldier, an imperator, whose power is only limited by his life. The will of the armed legions will henceforth prevail over that of the citizens.<sup>1</sup>

A half century of struggle between rapacious and traitorous politicians was brought to an end by the triumph of Cæsar and the overthrow of the Republic. The people never regained their power, the history of Rome became the story of a vast and continual orgy, the disease of the city passed to the Empire, and Roman civilization fell into decay and ended in the Dark Ages.

### *Chicago Style*

The fifty years of political strife that ended with the success of Cæsar and his army re-

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<sup>1</sup> *History of Rome*, Merivale, p. 219.

sembles in a striking degree the half century of political warfare in Chicago that culminated, in April, 1931, in the victory of the Democratic Tammany machine and its boss, Tony Cermak. In the one case, the instruments were an army and a general; in the other a machine and a boss, but in both the power of the people was overthrown; they were reduced to helplessness and the forces of vice, greed, and public plunder became triumphant.

Chicago, the distributing center for a vast region of unsurpassed fertility, with an unlimited supply of fresh water at its door, the gateway to the Golden West, had become one of the greatest railroad, industrial, packing, and financial centers of the world, and its wealth had reached fabulous proportions and was rapidly increasing. Control of its government afforded an opportunity for limitless graft.

Through its gates and over its walls there poured a succession of the most rapacious political bosses that ever disgraced a city—Roger Sullivan, Billy Lorimer, Jim Pease, Bobby Burke, Jimmie Quinn, Bathhouse John, Hinky Dink, Ed Litsinger, Fred Busse, Fred Lundin, Charlie Barrett, Bob Crowe, Homer Galpin, Bill Thompson, George Brennan,

Tony Cermak, and innumerable others, big and little. Their consuming desire and ambition was to gratify their lust for money and power. Party names, slogans and war cries were merely smoke screens as they fought each other with jungle-like ferocity for access to the public treasury. Public appeals came to have little significance, the control of primaries and elections passed into the hands of bosses and their mercenary armies, and the political activity of the disinterested citizen was limited to the futile gesture of ratifying machine-made "slates." The form of representative government remained, but its substance disappeared. During these years of warfare, Chicago's Tammany Hall overthrew one machine after another, put one boss after another "on the spot," and at length, under the leadership of Tony Cermak, took absolute command of metropolitan Chicago.

### *Claims and Realities*

Chicago has issued invitations to the nations of the world to participate in an Exposition, which it is to hold in 1933, in celebration of a century of progress. This act has aroused little of the enthusiasm with which the people everywhere greeted the announcement of the World's Fair of 1893. Humili-

ated by her unsavory reputation throughout the world, and apprehensive of its effect upon the coming Exposition, certain of her citizens are announcing that a new day has dawned for Chicago. The fact that a few notorious gangsters have been convicted of income tax evasions is hailed as evidence that "Chicago has crime on the run," although this was accomplished by the Federal Government, and organized gangsters and the political system under which they are protected and flourish are more firmly intrenched than ever before.

It is citizens of this type who are now asserting that the defeat of William Hale Thompson and the election of Anton J. Cermak as Mayor marked the beginning of Chicago's political redemption. But the exact opposite is the fact. It marks the extinction of her old-time self-respect and fighting spirit, and her surrender to the most sordid elements within her borders. It marks the elevation to the office of Mayor of a politician who for over a quarter of a century has been engaged in politics of the type symbolized by the word Tammany. It means the final triumph of a sinister and ruthless political machine that from now on will hold Chicago bound, gagged and helpless, just as Tammany Hall holds the City of New York. Its bosses will be intelli-

gent enough to apply a sufficient amount of public funds to public purposes to enable the government to function; they will do the necessary amount of window dressing; they will avoid buffoonery and public discussion, as far as possible the traffic in special privileges will be concealed, and the work of public exploitation will be carried on with noiseless efficiency.

In order to understand the present situation in Chicago, the meaning of Cermak's election and what it portends for the future of American institutions, it is necessary to understand his political machine, his methods, and the strength of the organized forces of vice, lawlessness, graft, political corruption, and coercion upon which his power rests.

### *Methods of Warfare*

During the entire period under consideration, the politicians of all factions of both parties were busily engaged in bluffing, buying, selling, double-crossing, and in bipartisan deals. Above the crash and din of this political orchestra could be heard the strains of the oratorical music. Carter Harrison called upon the people to save their streets from Yerkes; Edward F. Dunne demanded the immediate municipal ownership of the street-

car lines; John M. Harlan denounced the crooks and grafters; Graeme Stewart urged the application of business principles to the government of the city, and Charles E. Merriam summoned the people to elect to office men who would establish honest and efficient government and make Chicago a modern, wholesome, and beautiful city—a fit habitation for its people.

The quality of oratory steadily deteriorated and ended in the buffoonery of Thompson and the cheap billingsgate of his opponents. He appeared on the platform with halters, donkeys, and cages of rats, called his opponents liars and rats, announced that he was for America first and that he was ready to “whack King George on the snoot.” Speaking of Edward R. Litsinger, one of his opponents in the Republican primaries of 1927, he said: “Ed Litsinger lived back of the gashouse, and when he moved to the North Side he left his old mother behind.” Litsinger’s reply was: “Bill Thompson has the carcass of a rhinoceros and the brains of a baboon.” Thompson’s other opponent in this primary was his former friend and ally, Dr. John Dill Robertson. Speaking of him, Thompson said: “The ‘doc’ is slinging mud. I’m not descending to personalities, but let me tell you that if you



want to see a nasty sight, watch 'Doc' Robertson eating in a restaurant. Eggs in his whiskers, soup on his vest; you'd think he got his education driving a garbage wagon."

Thompson declared that Judge John H. Lyle, his principal opponent in the Republican primary of 1931, was a "nut." The reply of the judge contained the following oratorical gem:

The people have grown tired of this blubbering jungle hippopotamus defending his gangsters and crooked contractors by slobbering insults against the people of Chicago.

He calls me loony. Did you ever see a lurching, shambling imbecile with the flabby jowls of a barnyard hog, whose diseased brain didn't defend its own lunacy by snarling at others?

### *Two Types of Bosses*

If one is to understand Chicago, he must grasp the fact that during this period there were two types of political bosses who resembled each other only in their greed and their morals. Those of one type were corrupt, vain, noisy, vindictive, short-sighted, and short-lived. They were unable to work together and agree upon a satisfactory division of the spoils. They did not understand the importance of leaving the city enough to

save it from bankruptcy and of providing a government that would not bring public impatience to the point of revolt. As a result, no sooner has a boss of this type achieved his triumph, fancied himself a Napoleon and begun to fill the pockets of himself and his gang, than another boss or combination of bosses has dislodged him and taken his place at the public trough. Chicago has been the prey of a long succession of hungry and undisciplined political pirates of this type.

Those of the other type were corrupt, retiring, silent, coöperative, far-sighted, and long-lived. Quietly, patiently and effectively they welded the forces of vice and greed into a permanent and resistless organization that has captured metropolitan Chicago and is moving on to Springfield and Washington. This organization has lost many battles, but it has won every war, and it is so thoroughly intrenched that its leaders believe that in the future it will lose few battles.

## *Chapter Three*

### CHICAGO'S TAMMANY HALL

#### *Its Birth and Early Struggles*

#### *The Big Four*

IN THE beginning, this organization was known as the Sullivan Democracy. To-day it calls itself the Regular Democratic Organization of Cook County, and good citizens who have cut their eyeteeth have branded it Chicago's Tammany Hall. Its founders and builders were Roger Sullivan, John F. O'Malley, George Brennan, and Tony Cermak. Their ideals and methods were those of Tweed and Croker. Sullivan and Brennan were prosperous and presentable men, and they dealt with the upper world, while O'Malley and Cermak handled the underworld.

A single remark of O'Malley's gives a more perfect insight into his political methods than would a volume of history and description. For many years he was head of the Sullivan Organization of the Twenty-first Ward, and his rival was "Hot-Stove" Jimmy Quinn, head of what at that time was the regular Democratic organization. Quinn induced Honoré

Palmer, son of one of Chicago's multi-millionaires, to run for alderman and he was elected. There were glorious days for the boys! They lived in clover and on one occasion they were even permitted to enter the "Castle" and substitute champagne for "suds." Finally Honoré got tired of footing the whoopee bills and quit. At the time of the next election, O'Malley said: "Damn that feller Quinn! By trotting out that Palmer guy, he raised the price of votes in the Twenty-first Ward from fifty cents to two dollars!"

As leader of an organization which assumed the misleading name of the *United Societies*, Cermak aroused and organized the underworld to enforce its demand for a wide open town. For a quarter of a century, any politician, whatever his party, who dared to support any measure that would curb the license of those antisocial hordes, was immediately confronted by Cermak, snarling and waving the club of the underworld vote. His great and distinctive contribution to the Tammany organization was the support of Chicago's dregs.

An incident that occurred during the prosecution of Timothy J. Crow and other officials of the Sanitary District, above referred to, illustrates the character of George Brennan.

Thomas D. Garry, who had formerly been his confidential secretary, testified that the placing of hundreds of men on the pay roll who did no work, was a part of one of Brennan's deals in an effort to defeat a former city hall administration and to pass a water meter ordinance in which he was interested. He said:

Brennan whipped the aldermen into line to pass that water meter ordinance. He called in the aldermen and some of them said that they would be damned if they would vote for it because their constituents were against it. Brennan told them that they would be damned, that he was for the ordinance and that he would make them be for it and like it. And they did.

Brennan had a lot of deals on. He outsmarted the Republicans. He kept them fighting among themselves, and that is why he could beat them. His idea was that politics was a business and to get the best out of it that you could. He was a real boss.

Roger Sullivan, the founder of the organization, first came into special prominence in connection with the Ogden gas deal, one of the most corrupt and infamous pieces of political blackmail in the history of Chicago. He believed that the people were legitimate prey and that politics was the fine art of ex-

plotting them. He was not immoral, he was simply amoral. This was one of the sources of his strength and success. Other bosses had some appreciation of the difference between right and wrong and sought to justify their conduct on the ground of necessity or by some other form of rationalization. Many of their mistakes and absurdities resulted from the weakness and confusion that always attends the divided personality. Roger had the strength and efficiency that comes from a unified personality. His sole object was to enlarge and consolidate the power of himself and his henchmen and to appropriate public funds and other forms of wealth belonging to the people. His sole desire was to obtain the graft and cover up his tracks. If explanations were made, it was not in any degree to ease his own conscience but to facilitate his getaway. He knew how to take the long view, bide his time, keep still, avoid public discussion, bend to storms, secure public approval by stepping into some acute situation and helping the public to get something it wanted, and by giving to unsophisticated good citizens a type of recognition that would avert criticism but not endanger his power. But whether making a gesture of public service, selling a franchise or buying a vote, he was

devoid of sentiment and relentlessly pursuing his course of exploitation.

### *Bed Rock*

He and his associates did not start out by announcing public policies, denouncing their rivals, or emitting war cries. Like master builders, they sunk their caissons to bed rock. Blocks, precincts, and wards were minutely organized on the impregnable basis of selfish advantage. Every man was rated at his actual value in money or votes. The sentimentalists, talkers, and four-flushers that swarm about political headquarters were chilled into silence by being called upon to stand and deliver. Accurate determination was made of the amount of money a man was worth as a worker, of the kind of job to which he was entitled, and the fair cash value of the various types of public favors and special privileges. No chances were taken; there were no overpayments; nothing was given except for adequate return and there was no waste effort or lost motion. Every trade and bipartisan deal was so astutely managed that the organization emerged strengthened and more firmly intrenched. Like an octopus, it coiled its tentacles around seats in the City Council, the legislature and many minor offices; through

bipartisan deals it inserted parasitic arms into powerful and lucrative Republican offices and finally it threw an arm around the County Building and another around the City Hall.

But to understand the real significance of the growth of this organization, we must look a little farther into the circumstances of its origin, for as it has grown in scope and power, it has not deviated from the purpose or spirit of its founders. The Democratic organization was formerly controlled by Carter Harrison, Edwin F. Dunne, Bobbie Burke, Jimmy Quinn, "Bathhouse" John Coughlin, "Hinky Dink" Kenna, "Johnnie" Powers, and others. The first objective of Roger and his gang was to obtain control of the Democratic machine. They had no issue to discuss and but little official power, and so could not appeal to the general public nor deal on a large scale with those seeking governmental favors and privileges.

### *Organizing the Underworld*

But there were powerful elements in the community that were working for the suppression of the liquor traffic, the use of habit-forming drugs, prostitution, gambling, crime, and other forms of social disease, and their



activity aroused a spirit of fierce resentment in the denizens of Chicago's vast underworld. The capitalization of this resentment offered a golden opportunity which our heroes were quick to seize. They descended into the slime and organized saloon keepers, bartenders, ex-convicts, brothel keepers, gamblers, and criminals for mutual protection against meddlesome reformers. This was the foundation of the "Sullivan Democracy."

Prior to this time, the antisocial forces of the city, while powerful, had never been thoroughly organized and drilled for political action and could put up no united front against the forces of civic health and decency. Now, however, Roger and his crew inaugurated their long struggle for power by welding Chicago's dregs into a compact and militant political organization that was in sympathy with their desires, represented their point of view, and was ready to fight to the last ditch every effort made to curb their perverse and degenerate activities and their determination to maintain a wide-open town. These elements were brought together into precinct and ward organizations throughout the city, and although they appropriated the name "Democrat," and pretended to be a faction of the party, they were in the beginning simply bush-

whackers voting in either Democratic or Republican primaries, and at elections working and voting for the candidates of either party as their interests dictated. They had three definite objects: First, to prevent the nomination of good men for public office; second, where good men were nominated, to endeavor, by promises or threats, to induce them to stand for a wide-open town, or—failing in that—to accomplish their defeat; and third, to obtain the largest possible amount of cash for their votes and influence.

### *A Snapshot of John F. in Action*

A personal experience will illustrate their methods of operation. During the years in which the Sullivan organization was rising from its feeble beginning to its position of power, I took an active part in the politics of the Twenty-first Ward and knew the precinct captains and other leaders of that organization in the ward and watched their operations closely. Roger's henchman, John F. O'Malley, was not only head of the Twenty-first Ward organization, but also his spokesman for the division of the city known as the North Side. In appearance, John F., as he was familiarly known, was the cartoonist's ideal of a member of the chain gang or a worker on the stone

pile. In his earlier days he had killed a man and during the period under discussion he was the proprietor of a saloon near the river which, by common consent, was one of the lowest and toughest dives in the city. It was the hangout for race-track touts, gamblers, pimps, safe blowers, pickpockets, crooked lawyers, straw bondsmen, fixers, and the whole fraternity of men who lived by their wits. In every precinct he had a gang of plug-uglies who would vote as he directed. This was his organization. In those early days he could not hope to nominate or elect anyone to office, and he simply conducted himself as did other Sullivan leaders throughout the city.

In 1903, I was the Republican candidate for alderman of the ward. My opponent, Honoré Palmer, was being vigorously supported by Jimmy Quinn, the boss of the regular Democratic organization of the ward. About a week before the election, when the excitement of the campaign had reached its height, John F. called me up and said that he had some important information to give me and asked me to meet him in a cheap hotel that adjoined his saloon. He led me up several flights of stairs to a dingy little room in the rear of the hotel. In it there were only a table and a few chairs. We sat down, he handed me a fat

cigar and got down to brass tacks at once. He said:

You are making a fine campaign and from the reports that my men give me from all parts of the ward, I think you can lick that Palmer guy, but it is going to be close, and you will need every vote you can get. If I could turn over enough money to my men in the various precincts, I could insure your election, and you would be made politically. I know that your backers will put up all the money you need, so here's your chance.

There were many men who made such statements as these and put whatever money they were able to get into their pockets. If that had been John F.'s game, his organization would not have achieved the success that it did. He knew what he was talking about, meant just what he said, and would have carried out his part of the bargain. I was defeated by a little over five hundred votes and John F. could and would have given me a substantial majority, weakened his rival, pledged me to a wide-open town, and lined the pockets of himself and his gang. When I declined to give him the money, he did not support me anyhow in order to defeat his rival Quinn, because that would not have taught Republican candidates the lesson that he wished them

to learn—which was that they must pay his price if they wanted his help.

As the strength of the Sullivan organization increased, and reached the point where it could dispense jobs and special favors, John F. became a power not only in that organization but in the politics of Chicago, and there are many men wearing judicial robes and holding other important positions who were first put upon the ticket by John F. as a result of deals by which they satisfied his financial demands and pledged themselves never to use their power to curb the “personal liberty” of himself or the type of people whom he represented.

### *Tammany Camouflage*

From the very beginning, Roger and his associates were masters of the art of concealment and deception. They were organizing for mutual protection saloon keepers, dope sellers, gamblers, proprietors of brothels, criminals, political highwaymen, and all others who wished to place their privileges as American citizens on a cash basis. Their organization no more represented any of the historical principles of the Democratic party than does that of Al Capone and his gangsters. Yet they paraded as Democrats, entered

Democratic primaries and conventions, put every rival Democrat "on the spot" and became absolute masters of the party machinery. The American people are jealous of their liberty, so these men proclaimed that their organization was the champion and bulwark of personal liberty. They did not make it clear however, that the type of liberalism which they represented was complete tolerance and encouragement for all the antisocial and destructive elements in the community and a savage intolerance for, and a sneering and insulting attitude toward, men and women who were struggling to build a cleaner and more wholesome city.

They recognized the short-sighted folly of bosses of the type of Lorimer, Crowe, and Thompson who grabbed everything in sight and met public sentiment with brazen defiance. They knew that they could not defend themselves at the bar of public opinion; that they must work under cover, avoiding controversy by leaving enough in the public treasury to permit governments to function, sacrificing particular elections, making gestures of public service, throwing crumbs to social workers and philanthropists, dressing their show windows with prominent citizens for the people to gape at and using committees with

high-sounding names and composed of men and women whose names were well known. But no "highbrow" was ever given any position that would authorize him to go behind the scenes or enable him to throw sand in the bearings of the machinery. Accurate books were kept and no one, from a prominent citizen seeking publicity or a franchise to a floater seeking a dollar for his vote, was carried on these books for a moment after red ink appeared in his account.

### *Political Gang Warfare*

When Roger and his gang had organized and mobilized the city's dregs and by threats, sabotage, trades, bipartisan deals and the corrupt use of money, had "muscle into" the Democratic organization, they began to pick off its leaders, big and little, and take them "for a ride." As this work progressed and they captured one important office after another, they were able to an ever-increasing extent to traffic in political jobs and to auction off governmental favors and special privileges to the various types of grafters who posed as good citizens and maintained their respectability. But whether depositing millions of dollars of public funds in particular banks or dispensing other favors to prom-

inent citizens and social leaders, maintaining a wide-open town for saloon keepers, gamblers and vice lords, or buying votes, they never for a moment lost sight of their goal, which was graft.



## *Chapter Four*

### THE CONQUEST OF THE UPPER WORLD

IN 1920 Roger shuffled off this mortal coil and his scepter passed to his chief henchman, George Brennan. George was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, and for years they had been comrades in the great struggle to bring together the forces of degeneracy and greed into an organization that would be unshakable. The change of masters brought not the slightest jar to the machinery. There was not the slightest change in the motives, methods, or objectives. The organization had achieved such a position of power that the respectable grafters in ever-increasing numbers were turning to it for the jobs, immunities, and special privileges which they sought. George demonstrated his genius by the manner in which he utilized these elements to carry on the work of erecting a superstructure that would rest securely upon and be in perfect harmony with the foundations already laid. With good humor, patience, tact, and inflexible determination, he pursued the objective of his predecessor, which was to build

up a Chicago Tammany Hall that would control the governments of Chicago, Cook County, and Illinois.

His willingness to labor and to wait, his mastery of the art of political camouflage, his skill in avoiding criticism, the manner in which he could meet reformers and leading citizens, allay their suspicions and cause them to break forth into song while he "played them for suckers," his ability to run gayly before the wind of public sentiment, turn the rudder just in time to miss the port and leave the good citizens and his Democratic and Republican rivals feeling foolish and ashamed to say so, were well illustrated in the mayoralty campaign of 1923. For eight years Thompson and his gang of political amateurs had prostituted the school system, pillaged and disgraced the city, and slapped the public in the face. As a result, the people were aroused as they had not been since the days of Yerkes and were calling loudly for a mayor with the experience, vision, and qualities of leadership which the crisis demanded. There were many men of the type of Charles E. Merriam and Harry A. Wheeler who measured up to the requirements of the situation and were able and would have been willing to take the helm.

The selfish, strutting, and futile little Republican bosses, after dickering, maneuvering, and fooling around for weeks, entered two candidates in the primaries: one was Edward Litsinger, a cheap, braying politician and chronic office seeker; the other was a man by the name of Alfred C. Lueder. The people knew nothing about Lueder except that he held the job of Postmaster. I asked the leader of the faction that sponsored him why they wanted to put up such a man, and he said that during the next two years there would be in progress a bitter struggle for the control of the Republican organization, and that they would rather that the mayor be a Democrat than a man they could not control. As a result of superior machine support, Lueder was nominated.

### *Window Dressing*

Disgusted by the selfish and irresponsible attitude of the Republican bosses, a group of intelligent and public-spirited citizens, under the sincere and effective leadership of Mrs. Kellogg Fairbank and others of her type, turned to the Democrats. As George Brennan was the boss of the Democratic machine, they necessarily turned to George. When they flocked to the throne room, he beamed upon

them, expressed his profound sympathy with their aims, purred as they praised him and graciously consented to accept their candidate. They had had the good sense to make this as easy as possible by agreeing on Judge William E. Dever. The judge was honest, courageous, and public-spirited and as alderman and judge he had had years of experience in practical politics and knew how to deal with a man like Brennan. So when the judge had agreed that, with the exception of a few show-window positions, George would be permitted to dispense all the patronage of the office, he was given the nomination and carried into the office of mayor on a wave of popular enthusiasm.

But before George entered the throne room, wreathed in smiles, he and his general staff had met behind closed doors, taken out their war maps and manuals and with faces sternly set, had figured out how this move would fit in with the strategy of the campaign to Tammanyize Chicago. There were many things to be considered. The overwhelming defeat of their candidate, Bob Sweitzer, in 1915 and 1919, convinced them that a situation had not yet arisen in which they could hope to force one of their gang into the mayor's office. With the kind of support that Dever could com-

mand, it was almost certain that he could be elected, and he could be depended upon to keep his promise with reference to the patronage. It would enable them to overthrow their rivals and opponents and for the first time to name the mayor of Chicago. It would divert attention from their other and more sinister operations. It would bring them popular approval and permit their leader to pose as a benevolent boss.

That was all to the good, but could he do any harm? With George in control of the patronage, Dever could not build up or strengthen a rival organization. With this danger eliminated, only one other question remained: Could he endanger the system of graft and public exploitation that had been so patiently and skillfully built up? In connection with this question, there were many things that gave them assurance. Tony Cermak, the recognized leader and mouthpiece of the underworld, had been elected president of the County Board and was in control of that powerful body. Brennan's bipartisan ally, the notorious Bob Crowe, was State's Attorney of Cook County. Aldermen, sanitary district trustees, county commissioners, treasurers, clerks, bailiffs, sheriffs, policemen, and many of the judges were creatures of the

crooked political bosses and beneficiaries of the system of graft and exploitation. So it was evident that whatever might be his intentions, Dever would be powerless, and his attacks on the entrenchments of graft would be as futile as were the assaults of Don Quixote on the windmills. It was also evident that any attempt that he might make to enforce the prohibition law would be more than offset by the disrespect for that law which he would create by his criticisms and his attitude of endeavoring to compel the people to obey a law which he declared should not be in the Constitution or in the statute books.

The inevitable happened. In spite of the sincere and vigorous efforts of Mayor Dever, political corruption, vice, and crime flourished and extended their sway during his administration and, disillusioned and disheartened, he passed from the picture, conscious of the fact that the city he loved had the reputation of being the most corrupt and lawless city in the world. During this time, Brennan, relying on the good name of Dever to shield him from public wrath and contempt, enlarged, strengthened, and provisioned his army of political mercenaries, did business with the grafters, big and little, respectable and disreputable, and advanced his lines and

established his entrenchments at a position from which he could hope to capture the city government, the office of State's Attorney and all other offices within Cook County.

### *A Decisive Battle*

The year 1926 was marked by the disappearance of all opposition to the Brennan dictatorship within the Democratic party. Carter Harrison, enemy of Yerkes and five times mayor of Chicago; Edward F. Dunne, judge, mayor, and governor of Illinois, and William L. O'Connell, prominent party leader, were "put on the spot" and Brennan's rule became not only absolute but undisputed. The situation is concisely stated by Professor Carroll H. Woody in his penetrating study of *The Chicago Primary of 1926*. He says:

On his (Roger Sullivan) death, the undisputed succession went to his lieutenant, George Brennan, who immediately became a power in state and national Democratic politics as well as in Cook County. Some discordant elements remained, represented by such leaders as Carter Harrison, who, though no longer active, retained a personal following; former Senator James Hamilton Lewis; Edward F. Dunne, formerly mayor and governor; and his lieutenant, William L. O'Connell. These tended to coöperate with the dominant organization and expected to share

in the distribution of patronage accruing to the party after the victory in the municipal elections of 1923. Mayor Dever, however, permitted appointments to be handled through Mr. Brennan. The disgruntled opposition formed, in July, 1925, a competing organization, calling itself the "Democracy of Illinois." It was, however, but a faint shadow of the regular Democratic group, which was thoroughly and effectively organized along Tammany lines. While both the "Dunne-O'Connell" and "Brennan" groups appear during the campaign, the former was hardly a serious menace to the latter.<sup>1</sup>

There was much to warrant the assertion made by an attorney for the Brennan group in opposing a recount petitioned for by the "Democracy of Illinois": "They are not a faction, but only a flea bite."<sup>2</sup>

### *Strategy*

The campaign of 1926 furnished a good example of the strategy employed by Tammany's general staff in its long struggle to break the power of the Republican organization in Chicago and Cook County. During the years that it was a minority faction, Tammany's leaders were not, in a spirit of self-sacrifice, maintaining an organization to

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<sup>1</sup> pp. 33 and 34.

<sup>2</sup> p. 54.



represent some particular principle as were the socialists and prohibitionists; nor were they merely keeping up appearances, waiting for a break and indulging in that type of deferred hope that "maketh sick the heart." During all this time they were feeding greedily at the public trough. One of the devices by which they accomplished this result was the bipartisan deal. In cases where they knew that they could not nominate and elect one of their own men, they would make deals with Republican bosses whereby they would throw their mercenaries into Republican primaries and help nominate and later help to elect men who could be used and who would permit them to share in the spoils, immunities, perquisites, and all other advantages of victory. In this way, they were able further to provision their steadily growing army and to save it from dangerous forms of attack by inspectors, assessors, policemen, prosecutors, judges, and other public officials. Cool and far-sighted, they could always drive a hard bargain with the anxious, perspiring little Republican politicians who could not see beyond the result of the pending campaign. When the Tammany chiefs had reached the point where they felt certain that they could seize one of these offices for themselves, together

with all the advantages thereunto appertaining, they would quietly spring a trapdoor, drop their Republican ally into the cold river of defeat and oblivion, and move on with all the inevitability of the incoming tide.

The way in which these bipartisan deals were handled illustrates the brilliancy of Tammany's generalship. By this device it was able to defeat and ultimately to destroy its Democratic rivals; permitted to share in the huge corruption funds that the Republican bosses were able to collect; given the keys to the back doors of powerful offices that it could not yet control directly; enabled to defeat high-grade Republican candidates who would have given strength and prestige to their party, and to foist upon that party low, corrupt men who would disgrace and demoralize it and bring it into disrepute with the people.

From the standpoint of power and pelf, the most important offices were Mayor of Chicago, Board of Review, County Board, Board of Trustees of the Sanitary District, the Park Boards and the State's Attorney, through his control of criminal prosecutions, the County Judge through his control of the election machinery, and the County Clerk through his power to determine the order in which names

should appear on the ballots at primary elections.

In 1926 Charlie Barrett was a member of the Board of Review, and Bob Crowe was State's Attorney. These men were political pirates and, with former Mayor Thompson, were bosses of a powerful and disreputable Republican factional machine. Tammany had control of the County Board, County Judge, County Clerk and Mayor; and by means of a bipartisan deal with Crow, Barrett, and Thompson, it shared the spoils, power, immunities, and other advantages of the Sanitary District, Board of Review, and State's Attorney's office. In the campaign of 1926, these two piratical gangs had a complete working agreement by the terms of which all the offices to be filled were divided up between them. Brennan was not satisfied with Edmund K. Jarecki, his County Judge, and had him slated "for a ride." As the judge was popular with the members of his nationality and had the confidence of the people, Brennan was not crude enough to kick him out after the fashion of the Republican bosses. He gave Jarecki the nomination and went into the Republican primaries and helped Crowe and Barrett defeat Judge Daniel P. Trude, the honest and capable candidate of the Deneen

faction, and nominate Joseph P. Savage who, if elected, could be depended upon to be a pliant tool of the Crowe-Brennan combine.

In his statement announcing the candidates of the Harrison-Dunne-O'Connell faction, Mr. O'Connell said:

. . . These candidates express the sentiment of hundreds of thousands of Democrats in their uncompromising opposition to the methods and policies that dominate Mr. Brennan's so-called regular Democratic organization, which is betraying Democratic candidates and principles in the interest of a bipartisan working alliance with the Crowe-Barrett-Thompson wing of the Republican party.

In carrying out this bipartisan agreement with the Republicans, the so-called regular organization is trying to nominate a number of dummy candidates at the primary in April, whom they do not intend to support at the election in November. No secret is made of the fact that the Crowe-Barrett-Thompson Republicans have been assigned a certain number of county offices and the Brennan Democrats have been allotted the remainder of the places. Under this alliance the bipartisan combination expects this deal to go through on the assumption that the people will not be alert on primary day. . . .

The bipartisan alliance is not satisfied with its present scope of power, but is seeking to reach

out and take under its control all city, county, drainage board, and other local governing activities.

As Democrats we call attention to the danger that threatens our party by this bipartisan alliance and warn the democracy that if permitted to continue it will destroy Democratic independence and solidarity.

In discussing the issues of the primary campaign, Judge Dunne said:

Brennan and the Republican bosses made a bipartisan alliance and acquired control of the Sanitary District, the South Park Commissioners, and all other important offices in the state and county excepting two or three held by men too powerful to be beaten by the combine and excepting the office of County Judge.

To eliminate Judge Jarecki there was a plan to put up a papier-mâché candidate on the Democratic ticket. This plan failed, so an understanding was reached that Jarecki should be renominated, but that Savage should be nominated on the Republican ticket and that the Democratic candidate would be knifed by the Democratic machine at the November election. This is the present arrangement.

It also became important that the levying bodies, to-wit, the Board of Assessors and Board of Review, should be kept under the control of the bipartisan alliance, and that the men now holding these positions on the Board of Assessors

and the Board of Review should be renominated and elected.

In pursuance of this plan the Democratic boss has brought about the selection of a papier-mâché candidate for the Board of Review who is boiler inspector in the City Hall, and the selection of other weak and inconspicuous men on the Democratic ticket for assessors to be slaughtered at the polls, as it is proposed to slaughter Jarecki.

The Better Government Association, composed of independent and public-spirited citizens, in a protest against the favoritism shown by the county clerk in assigning places on the primary ticket, said:

The betrayal of this office by the county clerk in giving preference unlawfully to the Crowe-Brennan candidates upon the ballot at the April primaries is but a step in a sinister bipartisan agreement to seize the election machinery by the nomination of bipartisan candidates for county offices . . . and fasten upon Cook County a set of election judges and clerks who will do the bidding of the conspirators. . . .

If this agreement is not promptly defeated, it will become utterly useless for citizens to register or to vote, or for any candidate to attempt to run for office unless put forward by this bipartisan combine. . . .

It is unbelievable that the citizens of this community, when made aware of the dire peril which

thus threatens them, will tamely submit to having their birthright taken from them, or to place their lives, their property rights and the protection of their women and children in the unchecked keeping of these conspirators.

This sinister combine has already fastened its slimy hands upon the Drainage Board, where hundreds of politicians, including state senators, members of legislature and aldermen have been subsidized with salaries at the public expense, for services not to the public but solely to the combine.

Certain circuit court judges have been tempted, by the promise of lucrative positions for their relatives and close personal friends, into turning over to the combine at a secret session the South Park Board, with its immense patronage and magnificent program of improvement. Favorites of the combine are rapidly growing rich upon the juicy pickings, while the public pays the bill.

The recent betrayal of the public by the county clerk . . . is another advance in this gigantic deal for power and spoils, in securing which the combine has amply demonstrated it will stop at nothing.

In an editorial entitled "Where Does the Public Come in?" the *Chicago Daily News* summed up the situation as follows:

There are few more pathetic spectacles than that of a great body of citizens which has allowed itself to be bluffed.

This is true even where the body of citizens surrenders to a bluffer of distinction. It is especially true when the result is achieved by a bluffer of no distinction whatever.

The Republican Party of Cook County has fallen under the hypnotic eye of State's Attorney Crowe. It is commanded by him to perform a variety of curious gyrations to prove that he is its master. It is commanded, for example, to accept as its party candidates men who, if elected to office, would divide their official power and responsibility in sundry important boards and other bodies with Democratic officials who respond to the will of their party chief, George Brennan. And very specially it is commanded to accept as its own Crowe's and Brennan's candidate for County Judge, Joseph Savage, a candidate pronounced not qualified for the position by a committee of leading lawyers representing the Chicago Bar Association.

Brennan has a sense of humor, which is an excellent thing in a politician. Consequently he must be getting any number of laughs as he watches Crowe, aided by the Barretts, Brundage, Thompson, Galpin and the rest, heading the Republican Party of Cook County into the corral of which he and his fellow Democratic workers own an undivided one-half interest. It means for Brennan happy days in the Board of Election Commissioners and continued happy days in the Board of Sanitary Trustees, the County



Board, the South Park Board, and other tax-spending centers of high pressure activity.

Professor Wooddy sums up the results of this bipartisan primary as follows:

... the majority of the nominations on the Republican ticket went to men pledged to perpetuate the lowest standards of official conduct, to maintain a degrading system of patronage and spoils, to exploit rather than serve the public. And what can be said of the overwhelming Brennan victory as a comment on the civic sense of Cook County democracy? The most flattering explanation is that the Democratic constituency was unaware of the meaning and purposes of Brennan Tammanyism.<sup>3</sup>

While within the corral of which the *Daily News* speaks, in true Homeric fashion they feasted merrily, Brennan was conscious of a dark fact that had not occurred to his simple-minded Republican cronies, and that was that he was skillfully and remorselessly using them to help bring about a situation in which he could seize them, one by one, wring their necks, and appropriate all their possessions. He knew that just outside the faithful

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<sup>3</sup> Carroll H. Wooddy, *The Chicago Primary of 1926*, p. 243. The University of Chicago Press.

members of his own crew were patiently awaiting the summons to enter and take their places at the feast in the seats that had been vacated.

## *Chapter Five*

### THE MARCH TO VICTORY

CONDITIONS grew steadily worse. Citizens, prominent and self-satisfied as well as the obscure and humble, supposed that it was all the result of original sin, predestination, sun spots, or some other mysterious cause. Of course, Brennan, Cermak, and other members of Tammany's general staff knew what it was all about. For years they had been bringing together the scattered forces of lawlessness and graft into an amply provisioned, thoroughly disciplined and easily mobilized army of offense and defense. Its primary allegiance was not to names but to realities. If a high-grade and public-spirited man became a candidate for office, he had to be defeated no matter whether the word Republican or Democrat appeared above his name. The so-called good citizens had not, however, this degree of intelligence and practical efficiency. Approximately one-half of them would place a cross in the circle under the word Republican and the other half in the circle under the word Democrat, even though the men whose names

appeared in those circles might be utterly incompetent and corrupt. The politicians, therefore, came more and more to ignore them and centered their efforts upon securing the support of the more realistic and effective representatives of vice, lawlessness, and graft.

### *The Republican Party Goes Tammany*

There was no question whatever that all Tammany candidates were satisfactory to this element. The Republican politicians, therefore, saw that if they were to survive, they must enter into successful competition with Tammany for the support of the only large element of the community that was gifted with political intelligence. This marked the appearance of William Hale Thompson upon the scene, and a new era in the history of the Republican Party in Chicago and of the city itself. The word went out to the underworld that the town was to be wide-open, all public positions were to be sold for services or cash, every favor or privilege within the gift of the government to be auctioned off and go to the highest bidder, and the graft was to be divided and passed down the line, every man getting the split to which his services entitled him. They did not dress

the windows with prominent citizens or amiable dummies. They did not draw curtains or resort to other forms of concealment. With brazen effrontery they staged their performance in full view of everybody. They made the days of Lorimer, Pease, and Busse seem like the good old days of political honesty. Honest and capable men of the type of Graeme Stewart, John M. Harlan, Charles E. Merriam, Walter Clyde Jones, and Charles M. Thomson were driven from participation in the leadership of the party and from the public service, and the party and the city were taken over by the most corrupt gang of political pirates that has ever disgraced an American city—Lundin, Thompson, Ettleson, Francis, Faherty, Crowe, Barrett, Galpin, and others too numerous to mention.

Tammany helped to bring about this result not only by organizing the antisocial elements of the community but also by bipartisan deals and participation in Republican primaries. This was excellent strategy. It had destroyed its rivals within the Democratic Party, and it must now break the power of the Republican Party before it could obtain exclusive control of the rich pastures upon which its eyes were fixed. The skillfully planned campaign was completely successful. Escaping public wrath

by avoiding publicity, it feasted quietly with its Republican co-conspirators. It saw all men who were intellectually and morally qualified to serve the public driven from Republican leadership and the party delivered over to a crew of pirates. It saw the party disgraced, weakened, and demoralized. It witnessed buffoonery, listened to ballyhoo, saw vice, lawlessness and graft run rampant, and the very name Chicago become a byword among the nations as a result of Republican misrule. It saw the tide of public resentment and wrath rise steadily until it was about to engulf the party. It then, with characteristic cunning, took advantage of the situation which it had helped to create, gave the nomination for Mayor to Judge Dever and administered a crushing defeat to the Republican Party. Of course it first saw to it that Dever's hands would be tied so completely that while he led the people in prayer in the front room, Tammany could escape unmolested by the back door with the silver and the jewelry.

### *Scene Shifting*

Of course, Dever was only a makeshift and having been moved into the king row, Tammany strategy required that he be sacrificed as soon as he had served the purpose for which

he was given that position; for although he was willing to turn over the patronage of his office to Tammany to enlarge its army and swell its war chest, he had some quixotic ideas such as that the law should be enforced and that governmental privileges should not be sold for cash, and he was not willing, when the occasion required, to leave the show window, go into the back room and get down to brass tacks. Of course, Tammany was far too cunning to "put him on the spot" at State and Madison Streets at high noon, after the fashion of the Republican bosses. He must be "taken for a ride" by Tammany gunmen while Brennan drank tea and ate lady fingers with gushing reformers and other innocent good citizens.

### *Brilliant Generalship*

As the time for the 1927 mayoralty election approached, the all-seeing eye of Tammany took in the situation in all its details. Thompson was preparing the stage for a triumphant comeback and his opponent was Ed Litsinger, another politician with an unsavory record. Under any circumstances, the Republican Party did not have a chance for respectable leadership, but the most disastrous thing that could possibly happen to it would be the nomi-

nation and election of Thompson. From his past performances, it was certain he would bankrupt and disgrace the city and make it a laughingstock in the eyes of the world. It was also certain that public resentment would be brought to a point where the cry would be anyone to beat Thompson: In such a situation, Tammany figured that it could nominate one of its own gang and get away with it. So Tammany unctuously handed the Democratic nomination to Dever and went into the Republican primary and helped secure the nomination for Thompson. With the assurance that the lid would be blown off and the auction block reestablished in the City Hall, it required little pressure from above to deliver the Tammany hordes to Thompson and to defeat Judge Dever, who naïvely believed that laws should be enforced and governments administered in the interests of all the people.

Everything went according to schedule. The historian has stated the results as follows:

On clattered the machine to the top of the hill. The bosses controlled pay rolls running into hundreds of millions. Annual budgets, combined, would have financed many a European kingdom for a war.

Pay rollers formed a slave army numbering



tens of thousands. At election time they were hurled into critical spots on the battlefield and told to "do their duty."

To these mercenaries were added others even worse—the gunmen and sluggers. In fast automobiles they rushed about, "helping" here and there. They had no ambitions, no hopes, except to collect pay at a rate about half of what lawyers charged to keep them free.

The "regular" pay rolls were swollen at election times, or in legislative crises, to twice, thrice the normal; and to much more than the law allowed. After election the names of scores of supposedly reputable lawyers, real estate men and so on would be erased again, but not always quickly enough.

Every vice, every parasite, every swindle came back. The city lived again through diseases thought cured, but now more malignant.

Gambling, both mild race-betting and de luxe games such as roulette, flourished almost as openly and on a richer scale than in the "naughty 90's."

Prostitution once more became open in many sections. It was not segregated, but it now paid the politicians better when dispersed. De luxe "beer flats" were the best "pickings" in history. . . .

Yes, everything came back. Builders and architects fought extortionists far greedier and cleverer than in 1900 or 1920. Small contractors paid spot cash to get jobs in school buildings. . . .

Owners of small businesses found themselves

preyed on by gangsters organized into what they called "unions" much to the disgust of the great body of honest laboring men. The owners had to unite and to fight attacks which ranged from threatening letters to "pineapples."<sup>1</sup>

### *A Crisis*

This, of course, augured well for Tammany's future and gave it infinite satisfaction. But had it not overplayed its hand? Having helped to destroy decent Republican leadership and to deliver the party over to a gang of unscrupulous and corrupt bosses, had it not helped them to achieve such a position of power that they could ignore their factional rivals, dispense with bipartisan alliances, turn on Tammany and crush it and take complete control of Chicago, Cook County, the Park Boards, the Sanitary District and the State of Illinois? Their position at this time is accurately stated as follows:

The chill brutal facts were available. There was government for and by the politicians, and not much else. The Thompson-Crowe-Galpin merger had attained, by patient construction work, and by succeeding elections—frequently calling for recounts and even for grand juries—a

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<sup>1</sup> Lloyd Lewis and Henry Justin Smith, *Chicago, the History of Its Reputation*, pp. 468-471, Harcourt, Brace & Co.

control of Cook County offices which almost passed belief. They held a voting majority in, or ruled by threats of defeat "next time" all the police power, all the machinery of prosecution, a string of judges, both municipal and state, most of the bailiffs, members of taxing bodies, a slice of the County Board and another slice of the Sanitary District Board.<sup>2</sup>

Tammany had reached the critical stage in its long and ruthless struggle for dominance. It must garrote its bipartisan allies, crush their machine, and take direct and complete control of the government or see Chicago and its huge treasure chest pass permanently into the hands of a Republican Tammany under the iron rule of Crowe and his gang. By a series of powerful blows, recalling those delivered by the Allies in the closing days of the World War or the final phase of the struggle in which Al Capone put his rivals "on the spot" and became king of the gangsters, Tammany slaughtered its bipartisan allies, overthrew all its foes and took complete control of a disgraced and humiliated city.

An adequate account of the subtle moves, brilliant strategy, and ferocity of these closing battles would require a volume. It is necessary, however, to give a brief account

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 465-466.



International News Photos, Inc.

*Big Bill*



of the grand assault that began in 1928 and ended in the election of Cermak for mayor and the unfurling of the black flag of Tammany above the city of Chicago.

Ignoring the minor factors and cross currents, it may be said that for years prior to 1928 three major groups had struggled for the control of the Republican Party in Chicago: the Brundage, Deneen, and Crowe-Barrett groups. In addition to these, there was a large group of Progressives, who followed the leadership of Charles E. Merriam. They made no effort to build up a machine on the basis of jobs, privileges, and official blackmail. They had a comprehensive and definite plan for the establishment of an honest and efficient government, and they took it directly to the voters. Their appeal was to civic pride and patriotism. In the Republican primary of 1911, they defeated the Lorimer, Busse, and Deneen factions and nominated Merriam for mayor by a large majority, but he was defeated by a combination of bosses of both parties. In 1912, the Progressives left the Republican Party in a body, joined the Progressive movement led by Theodore Roosevelt, and carried both Chicago and Cook County. Later they returned to the party but were repeatedly repulsed by the powerful political organiza-

tions that were held together by "the cohesive power of public plunder." By 1928 the Progressive group was but a memory and could be safely ignored by the bosses.

Edward J. Brundage had been president of the County Board, Corporation Counsel of Chicago, and Attorney-General of Illinois. Upon the death of Fred A. Busse, Brundage became leader of the powerful machine that Busse had built up. His strength was further increased by an alliance with Senator Medill McCormick, which brought him the support of the *Tribune* and considerable Federal patronage. Brundage was above all forms of graft that could not possibly be called by any other name. He had no sympathy with the underworld or with brazen grafters, but he did not have the courage to fight them if so doing would endanger his personal interests. He wanted to have his power rest upon the firm foundation of jobs, and he chose amiable, negative men who were loyal to him and would not involve him in scandal, but who were incapable of conspicuous public service. The pious talk in which he constantly indulged represented his real sentiments, but at the first scent of danger he would beat an ignominious retreat. Lacking the intellectual clarity, idealism, and moral courage of Mer-

riam and the personal force and political realism of Deneen and Crowe, he did not have the confidence of the better elements of the community, nor did the spoilsmen and the underworld either trust or fear him. The men whom he selected for office were of the type that were marked for slaughter by Tammany through its bipartisan deals with his rivals and who aroused no particular enthusiasm in other quarters. The death of Busse had deprived his organization of its most powerful and attractive personality and its greatest expert in strong-arm methods, and it had lost the vigorous support of the *Tribune* through the death of McCormick. The machine no longer had the primitive recklessness and vigor required for successful participation in a political struggle marked by the ballyhoo, fakes, noise, slander, billingsgate, blackmail, threats, bribery, fraudulent registration repeating, ballot-box stuffing, short-penciling, crooked counting, kidnaping, slugging, murder, and other forms of fraud and carnage that had long characterized political warfare in Chicago. So by 1928, the power of Brundage had dwindled to the point where he had become a mere political peddler, trotting back and forth between the Deneen and Crowe-Barrett camps, trying to sell his little remain-



ing influence for places on their tickets. Both held him in contempt and the principal thing they gave him was the double-cross. He and his faction could therefore be ignored.

Deneen was a man of a different type. He had not taken his position of power by inheritance. He had won it by his own good sword and had held it for thirty years. Upright and public-spirited, had it been in his power he would have filled all of the offices in Chicago and Illinois with honest, courageous, and efficient men. At the time of which we are speaking, the few honest and capable men who still lingered in the public service were for the most part Deneen men. But he was also a man of blood and iron and ready to fight the devil with fire if necessary for his own survival. Among his closest political allies were such spoilsmen as Ed. Litsinger and the gangster, "Diamond Joe" Esposito. He entered into political deals with Lorimer, Busse, Brundage, Fred Lundin, Len Small, and into bipartisan alliances with various Tammany bosses. In his organization there were large numbers of job holders who were in no danger of shell shock and who could go "over the top" in the face of the most devastating artillery and machine-gun fire. Because of his personal honesty and his constant

struggle to serve the public by electing good men to office, and the confidence which this attitude inspired in the best elements of the community, and by his mastery of the art of machine politics, he was able to raise himself to a position of great power and maintain it over a longer period of time than any major political boss in the history of Illinois.

But Deneen had two handicaps that threatened to prove fatal to him in the kind of political warfare that was becoming more and more common since the rise to power of Tammany and the Crowe-Barrett machine. The men whom Deneen desired to nominate for office were distrusted by the gangsters and the underworld, and they added strength and dignity to the Republican Party. For these reasons, Tammany was ready to enter into a bipartisan alliance with Crowe and Barrett to defeat them in the primaries, and the Crowe-Barrett forces were ready to join Tammany to accomplish their defeat at the election.

As a result, Deneen's strength rapidly diminished until by 1926 his enemies controlled the Sanitary District, South Park Commission, County Board, taxing bodies, county judge, county clerk, State's Attorney, Mayor of Chicago, and other important offices. In

that year the Crowe-Brennan bipartisan alliance gave him a crushing defeat. It seemed that the election of Thompson as Mayor in 1927 had finished the work, and that he would take the count in the 1928 primaries; and that from thenceforth he could be ignored and the Crowe-Barrett-Thompson crowd would become as absolute masters of the Republican party as the Brennan-Cermak gang was of the Democratic Party. This result seemed all the more certain from the fact that, having patched up their differences, Crowe, Barrett, Galpin, Thompson, Governor Small, and Frank L. Smith (who had been elected to the United States Senate and refused his seat and was running again for that office) had joined forces and were working together.

If they were successful, it would mean the elimination of all serious opposition within the party and the control of the local state and federal machines by a gang of men who would have the confidence and enthusiastic support of job hunters, privilege seekers, grafters, criminals, and the whole underworld. They would have the control of large pay rolls; the disposition of vast sums of public money; the tremendous coercive power that comes with the ability to control the use of property, regulate the conduct of business, raise and lower

taxes, initiate or suppress criminal prosecution, and give orders to the entire police force of the city. Thus intrenched, and with the voters, who had no selfish interests at stake, apathetic, divided and following party labels with the simplicity of sheep, the Crowe-Barrett-Thompson machine could hope to secure absolute control of the city. It could then turn upon Tammany, dislodge it from the position it had secured and destroy it. The public saw only the superficial aspects of the campaign—the defeat of Crowe and his henchmen. It was only Crowe, Barrett, Brennan, and Cermak and their allies who really knew what it was all about. In the primary of 1928 they knew that their armies had reached the field of Waterloo and that the result would mean victory for one side and St. Helena for the other.

### *The Battle of 1928*

Tammany knew that Crowe must be crushed, and his machine defeated and demoralized. It also knew that Deneen must be restored to a position of power in the Republican Party. The threat of his ascendancy would drive the gangsters and underworld back into the fold of Tammany. His return would mean that he would put into the field

troops of candidates and orators who would fill the air with exposés and denunciations of the corruption and crimes of other Republicans and keep the party split and torn with fratricidal strife. As this was a presidential year, it probably meant that his candidate for State's Attorney, Judge Swanson, would be elected but with Thompson in control of the police force and an ample supply of subservient judges to issue writs of habeas corpus and dismiss suits and who were so well trained that they could be depended upon never to muff a technical ball thrown to them by an attorney for a gangster, it would be impossible for him to accomplish anything of importance—to menace the system. As Swanson was heavy, slow, and incapable of the type of swift and decisive action that would terrify criminals and thrill the public, he would add little strength to the leadership of his party.

In this, the decisive battle of its career, Tammany got all the "breaks." The elections of 1926 and 1927 had put the Crowe-Barrett-Thompson-Galpin machine in a seemingly impregnable position, but the corrupt methods employed by Frank L. Smith in his previous campaigns and his rejection by the United States Senate, had been thoroughly

exploited by the press. Governor Small, by his misuse of public funds, his trial on a criminal charge, and his wholesale pardoning of men convicted of the lowest crimes, had become thoroughly discredited. Thompson had made Chicago the most corrupt and lawless city in the world; he had brought it to the verge of bankruptcy and, by his buffoonery, had made it ridiculous. Bob Crowe had the reputation of being the most high-handed and dangerous man in the political life of Illinois. The Deneen candidates and orators and the press broadcast all these facts; the Better Government Association had been engaged for over a year in arousing and organizing the better elements for the defeat of Crowe; still the public continued apathetic and it seemed likely that the machine would triumph.

In the twinkling of an eye, the whole situation was changed by the explosion of bombs at the homes of Judge Swanson and Senator Deneen. Hundreds of thousands of people who were utterly indifferent to the fact that their rulers were ridiculous, incompetent, corrupt and lawless, suddenly became excited and began to be seized with spasms of virtue. This turned the tide of battle. The dying

struggle of the great machine has been vividly described as follows:

The day dawned; the booths were opened in the cold spring half-light. Upon the polls, all the way from battered, spittle-tarnished barber shops in the poor district to clean light rooms in the suburbs, descended the tremendous swarms of voters. In parts of the county they stood in quiet lines, with the same grim noncommittal look they had worn for many weeks. In other parts, and especially in the wards where famished or greedy or totally illiterate owners of votes could be bought or bulldozed, there were scenes suggesting that the great American franchise had gone into the depths. Every trick of short-penciling and stuffing of ballot boxes, taught to one generation of heelers after another by their kind of political science faculties, was played under the eyes of police and watchers. Votes were jammed into boxes by hundreds, by bales. In one instance sixteen ballots were credited to one address which proved to be a stable containing only that many horses. Hence the derisive saying of 1928, "Every horse voted."<sup>3</sup>

John Bright in his book entitled, *Hizzoner, Big Bill Thompson*, states the result as follows:

Best of all, the mighty Bob Crowe was tumbled from his high place. And King Len, for eight

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 480-481.

years governor of the state, was dethroned. The Thompson-Crowe-Small-Galpin machine was no more. It was in shreds. . . .

One by one, Bill Thompson's props have been kicked from under him. He curses sadly into his beer, but there isn't much he can do about it.<sup>4</sup>

### *The Battle of 1930*

In Tammany's long and relentless campaign for the capture of Chicago, the battle of 1928 was of crucial importance. It accomplished the reduction of the strongest fortification and the defeat and demoralization of the most powerful army that stood between it and its objective. But brilliant strategy, fierce fighting, and a large amount of luck were still necessary if it was to triumph in the last grand assault that would be made in the mayoralty election of 1931. The success of the Deneen slate had restored him to a position of power in the politics of the city. His term in the United States Senate would expire in 1930, and if he should be reëlected and the candidates on his slate should be successful, it might put him in a position where he could accomplish the defeat of Thompson and the nomination of a Repub-

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<sup>4</sup>John Bright, *Hizzoner, Big Bill Thompson*, p. 296. Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, Incorporated.



lican candidate for mayor, who would receive the support of the press and the public. This might make it necessary for Tammany again to nominate some good citizen like Dever and so postpone the time when it could make one of its own gang mayor and thus complete its conquest. It was necessary, therefore, that Deneen and his organization should be crushed. As before, Tammany got all the "breaks."

Mrs. Medill McCormick, daughter of Mark Hanna, was out after Deneen's scalp. She was a brilliant and charming woman, a veteran campaigner and willing to be eminently practical. She agreed with her late husband that one must be a senator before he can be a good senator, and she was determined to be a good senator. So she appealed to good citizens, compromised on the dry question, and made a deal with the Crowe-Barrett-Thompson machine. The leaders of this machine supported her in the primaries in order to crush Deneen and his machine, but because of the long-standing feud between them and the McCormick family, they planned to knife her at the polls and vote for the Democratic candidate. As Tammany would name that candidate, this promised a perfect result—the overthrow of its most dangerous opponent

in the primaries and the capture of a seat in the United States Senate at the election. Its fondest hopes were realized. It became the owner of a senator, and it elected its candidates for sheriff, county clerk, county treasurer, county judge, judge and clerk of the Probate Court, clerk of the Criminal Court, county superintendent of schools, Board of Assessors, Board of Review, judges of the Superior Court, trustees of the Sanitary District, chief justice, clerk and bailiff of the Municipal Court, chairman of the County Board, and twelve out of fifteen members of that board and nine out of twelve justices of the Municipal Court.

## *Chapter Six*

### THE FINAL GRAND ASSAULT AND VICTORY

#### *Tony Takes Supreme Command*

BY MACHINE gun and artillery fire and mining operations, Tammany had destroyed the armies that opposed its progress. It had brought up large numbers of fresh and well-equipped troops and established its trenches under the very parapets of the City Hall. Flushed with victory and full of confidence, it was ready and eager for the final grand assault upon the city of Chicago.

If we are to understand the overwhelming victory which it achieved five months later, we must pause for a moment to consider still other factors in the situation. In 1928 "Boss" Brennan was gathered to his fathers and his scepter had passed to Tony Cermak. Tony began his education under Sullivan, completed it under Brennan, and was an exemplar of the lowest type of machine politics that the corrupt political life of Chicago had yet produced. He was inordinately ambitious, and he was determined that he would be the next

mayor of Chicago, enter the field of national politics, and sit in with the president makers.

When issuing orders to his henchmen, showing his teeth and snarling at those who proposed that saloon keepers and bootleggers should obey the law like other people, or engaged in his underground operations, Tony felt sure of himself and acted with the authority of a master; but he was without any of the superficial qualities that are essential to the man who would take the part of a hero on this larger political stage. He was uncouth, gruff, insolent, and inarticulate. At public gatherings, banquets, meetings of women's organizations, afternoon teas, and other affairs of a similar nature, he would be as awkward as the traditional country cousin at a formal social function. He could engage in no more intelligent discussion of the larger political issues of the day than he could of the Einstein theory of Relativity.

*The Refulgent "J. Ham."*

Once again luck was with him and with Tammany. Tony had put on his chain the resplendent J. Hamilton Lewis. "J. Ham" was everything that Tony was not, and together they made a complete picture. How can one do justice to the Senator! The glis-

tening high silk hat, the sunflower wig, the professorial cord to his glasses, the flaming whiskers, the movie-hero clothes, the carefully matched socks, handkerchief and tie, the pearl spats, the patent leather shoes, the jewelry, the gold-headed walking stick, the Chesterfieldian manner, the golden voice, the brilliant repartee, the flowing eloquence, the fulsome flattery, the perennial smile, the air of intimacy!

He had but one conviction by which he would stand, and that was that he should be eternally in the spotlight. To further this end, he was willing to be all things to all men; to advocate or oppose the World Court or the League of Nations; to be dry, moist, or wet; white, pink, or red; for a round or flat world, or any other proposition that promised a headline.

He did not have the primitive energy, the relentless determination and industry and the ruthlessness necessary for the coarse work of public plunder in which Tammany was engaged; but for the more delicate and ethereal task of setting it to music, he was perfectly adapted. Tony knew that he could remain behind the scenes in his shirt sleeves and send the glistening Senator out to the footlights to sing just the song that would be most ef-

fective in diverting the attention of the audience from the low grinding noise of the machine. Tony also knew that any time he wanted the music changed to another key, the Senator had become so proficient that he could effect the transposition without lowering the curtain and without losing a beat or letting the audience know what had happened.

If we are to understand the mayoralty campaign of 1931 and especially the moves that Tony began immediately to make on the chessboard of national politics, we must know a little more about the refulgent J. Ham. In the late 90's he served a term in Congress from the State of Washington. One of the leading members of Congress for this period told me that J. Ham was the standing joke of the House. He said that J. Ham did little work and that when he attended a session, he always staged a dramatic entrance. He would wait until the preliminaries were over and the House had settled down to work, and then sweep down the aisle, arrayed like Solomon in all his glory, bowing graciously in all directions in recognition of the suppressed admiration which he fancied was seething in the breasts of his fellow members, and particularly in the breasts of the occupants of the galleries. When he was seated, certain of the

members would immediately look at his feet, for it was their custom in the evening to make bets on the color of the socks he would wear upon his next appearance in the House.

When he reached Chicago, he found Edward F. Dunne running for mayor on a platform calling for the immediate municipal ownership of the street railway lines and the overthrow of the sinister power of Wall Street. Dunne was one of those vague sentimental champions of the common people that occasionally get the public ear for a moment, but he was an indifferent speaker and a cause such as his needed a burning orator. His need was J. Ham's opportunity. In all his glory, and with the ardor of a Crusader, J. Ham mounted the platform as barnstormerin-chief for I. M. O., and its gallant protagonist, Judge Dunne. The multitudes were thrilled as they listened to the story of the martyrdom of the Gracchi. They shuddered as they witnessed the fall of Rome, and their hair stood up like quills on the fretful porcupine as they beheld the octopus of Wall Street entwining its slimy tentacles around the institutions of our fair country and reducing the common people to serfdom.

Dunne's opponent, the militant reformer, John M. Harlan, had long cherished the ambi-

tion of becoming mayor of Chicago. Because of his vigor, his courage, and great personal following, he had for years been a veritable thorn in the flesh of the Republican bosses. Finally they decided that the only way to get rid of him was to give him the nomination and then slaughter him at the polls. Harlan had been nominated for this specific purpose and all the Republican bosses and all their henchmen worked feverishly for the election of Dunne. As usual, the intelligence and public spirit of the city was no match for its demagoguery and treachery, and Dunne was elected and forthwith appointed J. Ham Corporation Counsel.

Intelligent laymen looked upon this appointment as another of Dunne's vagaries and simply smiled. The lawyers, however, appreciating its real significance, regarded it as an irresponsible and farcical act. But as J. Ham never came back at his critics but always turned the other cheek; as he was always affable; and as his poses and other theatrical stunts proved to be amusing, they gradually dropped their resentment and accepted the joke. This change in attitude may be illustrated by one of the many stories that went the rounds among the lawyers at this time. A case of great importance, to which the city



was a party, was set for hearing by the Supreme Court of the United States. Some of the ablest lawyers in the country had been selected as special counsel in the case, and they had been working on it for years and were thoroughly prepared to make the arguments on behalf of the city. J. Ham had neither the ability nor energy needed to master the voluminous records and ponderous briefs and prepare a serious argument. He could not afford, however, to pass up this opportunity for publicity, even if he did not know what it was all about. He, therefore, ignored all protests, forced himself into the picture and made an argument. After he had been talking for some time, Justice Holmes leaned over the bench and said: "Mr. Lewis, I can't get the slightest idea of what you are talking about." To which J. Ham replied, "Your Honor, I can only furnish the argument—not the capacity to understand it."

At the next election, Dunne was defeated and J. Ham began to run for office on his own account, and in 1912 presented himself as a candidate for the United States Senate. As Illinois was Republican by an overwhelming majority and as this was a presidential year, it was regarded as certain that no Democrat would have the slightest chance for success.

As a result, no Democrat who was entitled to be taken seriously wanted to waste his time by being a candidate for the Senate. This left J. Ham unopposed in the preferential primaries, and, necessarily, he was the winner. His campaign was regarded as a mere publicity stunt and no one paid the slightest attention to him.

As a result of the progressive insurrection in the Republican Party, the Democrats carried the state; and because of the expulsion of William Lorimer from the United States Senate, the Democratic legislature had to choose two members of that body. It ignored J. Ham and his primary vote and settled down to the consideration of serious candidates. A prolonged deadlock ensued which it seemed impossible to break. Finally Governor Dunne proposed that, as a compromise, the winners of the Republican and Democratic preferential primaries be elected, and this was done. J. Ham became Senator as a result of his publicity stunt and a series of political accidents, for which he was in no way responsible. In that body, he became the fervent advocate of all the Wilsonian policies. He was a candidate for reelection and was overwhelmingly defeated, but he did not abandon the vocation of running for office and seeking publicity.

He was a candidate for Governor of Illinois in 1920 and was defeated by a majority of over half a million votes.

From the beginning, he had been allied with the Harrison-Dunne-O'Connell faction, which came to be known as the "Democracy of Illinois." Its great function was to prevent the party and the city from being Tammanyized under the sinister leadership of such men as Sullivan, Brennan, and Cermak. In the campaign of 1926, the nominating committee of this organization, of which J. Ham was a member, in announcing its candidates, expressed the noble sentiments in regard to Tammany already set forth.<sup>1</sup>

The "Democracy of Illinois" was so decisively defeated at the polls that the Tammany spokesman seemed justified when he said, "They are not a faction, but a flea bite." This primary campaign was its last battle. It took the count.

What was J. Ham to do now? He could not follow Harrison and Dunne into dignified retirement and remain quiet. He was, however, unable to put on the garb of defeat and sing the songs of exile. The ruined palaces and deserted streets of the "Democracy of

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 61.

Illinois" were now a fit habitation only for the owl and the bittern. They furnished no appropriate setting for such a cheerful and melodious bird as J. Ham.

From this scene of desolation, he began to view with increasing admiration the rising splendors of Tammany and to realize that it offered a stage upon which he could do his turn without abandoning his stunning make-up or going into a minor key. This resulted in persistent day-dreaming, with the result that ideas of apostasy began to germinate. He recalled that in defense of the Wilsonian Democracy, he had, on many historic occasions, made the Senate chamber ring with his lofty eloquence; that before innumerable audiences he had summoned the common people to "awake, arise, or be forever fallen"; and that in many primary battles, as orator-in-chief for the "Democracy of Illinois," he had reminded his fellow citizens that it was her corrupt politicians that had caused Rome to topple and fall, and warned them that the modern representatives of these corrupt politicians—such men as Sullivan, Brennan, and Cermak—threatened our beloved country with a similar fate. He knew that if he should follow his dream that he would be compelled to eat his words in the presence of the

entire audience, but he also knew, from experience, that he could perform this act so delicately that few would know what was happening, and that as far as he himself was concerned, his spiritual digestion was so perfect that he could take care of any amount of food of this nature without a trace of distress or a tinge of remorse. So without further ado, he spread his wings and soon this gay bird of passage was behind the enemy's walls, perched upon the bust of Brennan, displaying his gorgeous plumage and singing with full-throated ease of the glories of Tammany. When the strains of this music reached the ears of Tony, he turned to his henchmen and said:

"That's the guy I'm lookin' for. He can make the boobs and highbrows, and particularly the dames, think that our racket is hot stuff. Put him on the ticket. See?" It was no sooner said than done.

His opponent, Mrs. McCormick, was opposed by the wets because she was running as a dry; by the drys because she had promised to abide by the results of the referendum on prohibition; by the Deneen organization because, through an alliance with Thompson, she had accomplished its defeat at the primaries; and by the Crowe-Barrett-Thompson

crowd because of its feud with the McCormick family. Supported by all these elements and with the solid backing of Tammany, J. Ham was, of course, elected by a large majority. Admiration for his personality, approval of his public policies, and confidence in his leadership had as little to do with his success as did the sign of the Zodiac under which the election was held. But victory in a Republican state and the title of Senator made just the additions he needed in order to dazzle the multitudes in his rôle of special pleader for Tammany. It also completed his qualifications as a pawn for Tony to use on the chess-board of national politics.

### *Chicago Seeks an Alibi*

There are other factors that must be borne in mind by one who would understand the final battle in Tammany's long campaign for the capture of Chicago. Because her rulers were amateurs in the art of government and professionals in the art of public plunder, Chicago had reached the verge of insolvency. The corrupt alliance between the politicians and the criminal classes had caused the paralysis of all the law-enforcing agencies, with the result that the city was given over to gambling, prostitution, dope selling, boot-

legging, brewing, "alky" cooking, smuggling, hi-jacking, racketeering, bombing, and gang warfare, and in every part of the world Chicago had become a synonym for lawlessness and crime. The mayor, by appearing on the platform with halters, donkeys, and cages filled with rats; by demanding the burning of pro-British textbooks; threatening to "whack King George on the snoot," and constantly bellowing "America first," had made the city ridiculous in the eyes of the world.

Chicago had shown that under ordinary circumstances, it had a remarkable tolerance for this sort of thing, but now an unusual situation existed. In 1933 it was to have its great exposition to celebrate a century of progress. From many quarters came reports to the effect that people were disgusted with Chicago and believed that life was not safe on its streets, and that the exposition would be a "flop." This threatened the pride and pocketbooks of the people and received an immediate and vigorous response. Something had to be done.

The "I will" spirit revived. Chicago rose to the occasion and worked out a brilliant solution of its difficulties. It had known "Big Bill" well, and the longer and better it had known him, the larger his majorities had be-

come. But its citizens agreed with the poet that

“Time makes ancient good uncouth.”

They decided that they would announce to the world that the evil reputation of the city was the result of the misdeeds of their moron mayor, that they would transform him into a goat, lay all their follies and sins on his back and send him off into the wilderness of defeat. Having done this, they would boldly proclaim that, whereas yesterday Chicago was broke, lawless and ridiculous, to-day it was solvent, orderly, and dignified. So a hue and cry was raised, various slogans were adopted such as, “Thompson must go,” “Anyone to beat Thompson,” “A yellow dog if necessary to beat Thompson.” This meant, of course, that if Thompson should secure the Republican nomination, his Democratic rival, however incompetent or corrupt, would have to be pictured as a hero, his faults covered up and that all facts tending to discredit him would have to be suppressed.

### *Tony Sees His Opportunity*

As Tammany was in complete control of the Democratic Party, it was in a position to go into the Republican primaries with every re-



source at its command, help nominate Thompson, complete the demoralization of the Republican Party, and make its own triumph a certainty. In this situation, Tammany knew that it would not have to do any window dressing as it did in 1923 when it nominated Judge Dever. It knew that it could nominate one of its own gang and get away with it. What a delightful prospect for Tony, the Czar of Tammany! Already he could hear himself addressed as "Your Honor." So when prominent citizens came to him with their hats in their hands and requested him to nominate some good man such as Judge McGorty, Judge Sullivan, or Dr. Bundesen, he told them to "take the air," and turned to his henchmen and said:

"Nix on them highbrows. That's my job. See?" and handed himself the nomination.

### *Republican Futility*

In the meantime, what were the Republicans doing? Never in his long history had Deneen met a major crisis in the affairs of the city or state with unselfishness, courage, and true vision. Never at such a time had he put forward a man who measured up to the requirements of the situation. Never had he looked beyond the interests of his machine,

and his desire to parcel out the jobs to his lieutenants. It is doubtless true that if he had pursued a different course, he would have gone under long ago, but be that as it may, in this, the greatest crisis in the history of Chicago, he ran true to form and put Alderman Arthur F. Albert forward as his candidate. Albert was an honest, well-meaning fellow but just a cog in the Deneen machine. He had no grasp of the real situation. He could not clarify and state the issues. He could not appeal to the imagination or command the confidence of the people. He was a corporal in the uniform of a general.

Another candidate was Municipal Judge John H. Lyle. He was opposed by the Bar Association, the *Chicago Daily News* and other independent elements. He was ignorant, erratic, and irresponsible. He was supported by the *Tribune* and an odd assortment of petty bosses who thought that he was their best bet in their effort to get at the public trough. The other candidate was "Big Bill the Builder."

During the campaign, Alderman Albert did the best that he could, but because of his personal limitations, he was unable to raise the contest above the plane of a factional squabble. Lyle and Thompson conducted their

campaign on the level of a barroom brawl. The *Daily News* gave the following summary of their respective statements:

THOMPSON-LYLE REPARTEE ROUSES INTEREST OF  
MIND EXPERTS

*"Can Both Be Right?"*

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REPARTEE

William Halitosis Thompson.

Nutty Judge.

Blustering loudmouth, irresponsible mountebank.

Jumbo the Flood Relief Quack.

Moron.

Blubbering jungle hippopotamus.

Arrogant, incompetent, inefficient judge.

Lazy, blood-sucking jobbers.

The hungry five.

Slobbering insults.

Lurching, shambling imbecile.

Flabby jowls of a barnyard hog.

Blubbering charlatan.

Sluggish being.

Mental vacuum.

Two jackass ears, a cowboy hat and an empty space in between.

Chambermaid in a ranch bunkhouse.

Tie on your hat, Jesse James; you're going for a ride.

—*From speeches by*  
*Mayor Thompson and Judge Lyle.*

In a long and trenchant editorial, the *Daily News*, among other things, said:

. . . The Daily News, as an honest newspaper, cannot advise voters to support a candidate whom it deems unfit to exercise the great powers of the mayoral office. It would regard the election to that office of either Thompson or Lyle as a calamity to the people of Chicago. . . .

. . . Republican voters of Chicago have reason deeply to resent the fact that Thompson and Lyle, though the unfitness of both for the mayoralty has been demonstrated in a thousand ways, at this time are leading contenders for the nomination of their party to that great office. Republicans have good cause to repudiate the unscrupulous leadership which has placed the party in such a shocking plight. Thompson's twelve years of official power have been one long scandal. As for Lyle, the Chicago Bar Association gave the public timely warning of his unfitness before the election last November—Lyle being then a candidate for a second term on the bench—when it pronounced this deliberate judgment upon him: "The bar is in general agreement that he lacks judicial temperament and the capacity for judicial office."

In the light of such facts as are here stated, Lyle's unfitness also for the office of mayor, like the unfitness of Thompson, is not open to question.

When the votes were counted, the result was found to be as follows: Thompson,

296,243; Lyle, 228,140; Albert, 99,506. With Chicago being plundered, disgraced and humiliated, this was all that the Republican Party could offer in the way of leadership to its distracted citizens!

### *Tammany Triumphant*

For more than a quarter of a century, the good people of Chicago had looked upon Tony as a spawn of the rotten Sullivan-Brennan machine and a low spoils politician. Now they pictured him surrounded by his family; they heralded the occasional sops that he had handed to social workers and reformers to distract their attention; made a hero of him, and elected him Mayor by a large majority. Chicago had put over its alibi, and it had opened its gates to the wooden horse.

### *The Morning after*

The significance of the election was clearly set forth in an article that appeared in the *New York Nation*, from which I quote the following:

This morning, with the election not yet twenty-four hours old, Chicago is already beginning to ask itself whether the price it paid to get rid of Thompson may not in the end prove too high, for the man elected in his place is A. J. Cermak,

Democratic boss of Illinois, and sole proprietor of a complex political machine built entirely along the lines of the Tammany organization in New York.

Cermak was merely an incident in the great crusade to kill Thompsonism—to use a Chicago phrase, which will be explained later. The rallying cry was, "Get rid of Thompson at any price." Hence Tony Cermak, the only alternative candidate available, drew the unanimous support of all the good people of Chicago. They did not inquire too closely into his record; they did not press him for binding promises and pledges; they swallowed him whole because he was the only man in the field who could beat Thompson—and Tony had seen to that months before the crusaders awakened to their opportunity. These crusaders took the position that "even a yellow dog would be better than Thompson," as one of their leaders expressed it to the writer. . . .

Perhaps Big Bill Thompson was as vicious as his defamers picture him. To the practical and unprejudiced observer it appears that Chicago has simply swapped one evil for another. Indeed, it is clear that the great crusade has had one net result: the people of Chicago, by electing Tony Cermak, have made him the most powerful political boss in the United States to-day. The power that lies in his hands is greater than that possessed by any other boss anywhere in the country; it may eventually prove greater than that of any other boss in American history, barring not even Tweed, Platt, Penrose, or Mark

Hanna. Cermak controls Cook County, of which Chicago forms only a part, the Sanitary District and its rich patronage, the South Park Board, the Illinois legislature, and one of the United States Senator from Illinois. He is expected to win the governorship and the other senatorship next year. . . . Cermak's rule of the State will then be absolute. More important, however, is the control of the Chicago governmental machinery which he won in yesterday's election. With it goes domination of the Civil Service Commission, the school system, and a host of appointive offices, control of which gives the mayor of Chicago more authority and more patronage than is possessed by any other municipal executive in the United States. . . .

. . . About two years ago officers of the Better Government Association, bitter foe of Thompson but nevertheless one of his supporters in the late campaign, set out to find an outstanding citizen, free from all political connections, whom they might persuade to run against Big Bill at the next election. They found only one or two men eligible for the post according to the association's standards, and these men refused to consider the suggestion. The others without exception were either intimately associated with Thompson and his friends, and were profiting therefrom, or stood to gain financially and politically by the removal of Thompson. Meanwhile, though he started somewhat later, Cermak began to prepare himself against the day when the moral indignation of the city, constantly fed by the press, would re-

sult in a popular revolt that would turn Big Bill out of office. His absolute control of the Democratic machine made it certain that he would get the Democratic nomination, which he did without opposition. The crusading business men and bankers did not awaken until after the primary last February, and then they found that they had to choose Thompson, Cermak, or an independent. . . .

Who is Cermak and what can he do for Chicago? He was born near Prague in Bohemia fifty-eight years ago and was brought to this country when still a child. In his early teens he worked with his father in the mines at Braidwood, Illinois, attending school about three months out of each year. His teacher was George E. Brennan, whom he later succeeded as boss of the Illinois Democratic machine. At sixteen he came to Chicago, worked at various odd jobs, and finally found himself in politics in the old Lawndale district of the city, then, as now, populated chiefly by Czechs and other Central and Eastern Europeans. He started as a precinct worker but being a born politician and understanding the value of the Tammany principle, which might best be described as "taking care of the little fellows in your own district," he rose rapidly, and by the time he was thirty, was sent to the State Legislature from the Lawndale district. His assembly record was distinguished only by his vote for Billy Lorimer for United States Senator, a vote which was the occasion of the sensational charges by Speaker Edward D. Shurt-



left and Representative Charles A. White. Cermak later served four terms in the Chicago City Council, and in 1922 was elected president of the Cook County Board of Commissioners, to which post he was reelected in 1926 and again later last year. He was defeated in the race for United States Senator in 1927. He was trained in politics by Roger Sullivan and George E. Brennan, though he had great difficulty in working in harness with the latter because he believed in "taking care of" the Czechs, Poles, and other non-Irish Democrats on the West Side to the disadvantage of the Irish who then controlled the Democratic city machine. Although Chicago's new mayor has never held a job that paid him more than \$12,000 a year, he is worth to-day more than \$7,000,000, according to the private estimates of several of his supporters in the mayoralty campaign. Thompson, by the way, already possessed his huge fortune before he ever entered politics, and his wealth is to-day less than it was thirty years ago. Finally, the political machine Cermak has perfected—and it is in operation in virtually every ward in the city—is not a personal machine built, as Thompson's was, around one man. It is constructed on a basis of organization. Much as the district leaders of New York's Democracy control Tammany Hall, the Democratic ward leaders run the Chicago machine, although final control rests securely with the boss. Persons seeking favors or privileges from the city or county government cannot go to the boss or one of his friends to get what they

want; they must apply to the ward leaders. These lesser politicians are also charged with the distribution of minor offices and other local or district patronage. It was relatively easy to dislodge the Thompson machine because it consisted of one individual; it will be much more difficult to dislodge the Cermak machine, when Chicago does finally awaken to the consequences of its action of yesterday, because the Cermak organization will be found closely woven into the very fabric of the city itself. It will be found to be another Tammany Hall, equally permanent and honest.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Hallgren, Mauritz A., *Chicago Goes Tammany*. *The Nation*, Vol. 132, No. 3433, April 22, 1931, pp. 446 447.

## Chapter Seven

### TONY SEEKS NEW WORLDS TO CONQUER

#### *Public Proclamation*

WITH a certificate of election as mayor of Chicago by a majority of 194,267 votes, and a United States senator on his chain, Tony strutted onto the field of national politics and proceeded to tell the Democrats of America whom they could and whom they could not nominate for president. He proceeded to New York and, after a conference with John F. Curry, head of Tammany Hall, and Mayor Hague of Jersey City, Democratic boss of New Jersey, in a statement which, for brevity, rivaled the famous *veni, vidi, vici* message of Cæsar, announced:

“Governor Roosevelt is wet enough for me.”

When the rumor began to spread that Governor Roosevelt, in order to secure Southern support, was willing to be just wet and not dripping wet, Tony rushed to New York for another conference with these Democratic leaders. They were well qualified to save

Tony from making any mistakes in his new rôle as the Democratic Warwick. The press dispatches stated the result of the conference between the members of this great Democratic triumvirate as follows:

Mayor Cermak of Chicago, arriving in New York, asserted a "dripping wet"—a man of the Al Smith type, has got to be the nominee if the Democrats hope to win. He explained he meant James Hamilton Lewis, United States Senator from Illinois. . . .

"A man of the Al Smith type has got to be the nominee if the Democrats hope to win," Mayor Cermak asserted. "If Governor Roosevelt is wet enough to be the Governor of New York and to be supported by Smith, he is probably wet enough for the national needs of the party. But when I speak of a man of Al Smith's type, I mean James Hamilton Lewis."

The Illinois delegates to the 1932 Democratic National Convention will vote as former Gov. Alfred E. Smith of New York wishes, Mayor Cermak of Chicago said to-day when with a group of political pilgrims he left New York City for home after a three-day visit.

Cermak expressed the conviction that the Democrats will select Chicago for the 1932 Presidential pow-wow and predicted that the man selected to run will be "dripping wet."

The fact that Cermak conferred lengthily with Hague, Walker, and Curry was looked on in some

quarters, however, as significant of a possible New York-New Jersey-Illinois alliance for 1932. . . .

On these two occasions, there were accessible such prominent Democratic leaders as Senators Walsh, Robinson, Hull, Glass, and others—men whose intelligence, integrity, and Americanism were beyond question. But Tony ignored these men and made straight for the lair of the Tammany Tiger. At the time of these conferences, the American people were deeply interested in such questions as the tariff, the regulation of public utilities, the financial situation, unemployment, the growth of lawlessness and crime, law enforcement, reparations, war debts, disarmament, and world peace. Tony was not concerned with the attitude of his candidate for president on any of these questions. All he wanted to know was: Is the candidate “dripping wet”? The only question that interested Tony was the one that was of supreme importance to his lifelong ally—the underworld.

### *Tony Completes His Conquest of Illinois*

In the spring of 1932, one year after Tony's coronation, there was a primary election in which candidates were chosen for governor, United States senator and many other state

and local offices and delegates to the national conventions. He entered in this contest a complete slate of hand-picked candidates. The men chosen were of the type that could be depended upon to take orders and to reëcho Tony's political philosophy so perfectly that there would be no danger of causing desertions from his army. When the campaign opened and these candidates began to perform, the hand of Tony could be seen above the stage pulling the strings and his voice could clearly be distinguished as they seemed to speak.

His candidate for governor was Henry Horner. Horner had been probate judge for seventeen years. He was not aggressively good or bad. He had no independent political strength. He simply went along and repeatedly received the nomination and election from the Democratic machine. He had not become notorious for any political "rough stuff," but in the berth he occupied he was the beneficiary of work of this kind on a grand scale. He never lifted his voice against the system of public betrayal and exploitation exemplified by Tammany; he did not join the fighting patriots of the city, but he lunched and drank tea with the type of reformers who exhaust their patriotic fervor in solemn con-

versation, and who are as dangerous to Tammany as a puff of wind is to Gibraltar. He was ideally equipped to act as a rubber stamp and to adorn a Tammany show window.

The governor has the appointment of hundreds of state employees. Horner's election would mean that every one of these employees, from the highest official down to the women who scrub the governor's office, would be named by Tammany. It would also mean that they would not be appointed because of their ability to serve the state, but because they would make effective soldiers in the mercenary army Tammany was building up for the purpose of fastening its grip upon Chicago and the State of Illinois. Tammany's policy of the wide-open town and government of the gang by the gang and for the gang would be in no more danger from Horner than from the most helpless child in the state. Furthermore, anyone who knows anything about politics knows that he had given conclusive proof of the fact that he did not intend and did not wish to interfere with this system, before he received the nomination.

From the standpoint of the election, it would have been better if Tony had given the nomination to Mr. Campbell or some other down-state man. The fact that Horner was

from Chicago and that he was a Jew was certain to prove a handicap to him among the voters outside of Cook County. But his nomination would help Tony to complete his conquest of Chicago and Cook County. Mike Igoe had started an insurrection among the Irish, and at that time it was impossible to tell how far it would go. The nomination of Horner would bring to Tony the support of the large Jewish vote in Chicago, and offset any possible Irish defection. In addition to this, Horner would serve as a good "front" for Tony and divert the attention of Chicago highbrows from his more sinister activities. In true Tammany fashion, he chose to risk a battle rather than a war.

At the outset, Horner sounded the keynote of the campaign that would be conducted by himself and the other men on the slate. He said: "I have no ambition to become a political leader. Therefore, such time as governors usually devote to party politics, I shall be able to save and devote exclusively to public service."

This statement was, of course, unnecessary. Everybody knew that Tony would attend to the politics and do the leading and that his candidates, if elected, would sit in their



chairs, do as they were told, and deliver the goods to their boss.

Tony had his own party so completely bluffed that the only other men who entered the Democratic primary as candidates for governor were "Mike" Igoe and Bruce A. Campbell. Igoe has been a petty and noisy cog in the old Sullivan-Brennan machines and was simply a Tammany politician run amuck. Campbell was an obscure and chronic office seeker. These two men were typical of the Democrats who presumed to oppose Tony's slate.

This primary also demonstrated the fact that Tony had the Republican Party, both in Chicago and Illinois, completely bluffed. As a result of his long series of victories, it had become perfectly clear that the decisive factor in all political contests in Chicago and Cook County was a vast, thoroughly organized and disciplined political army composed of the underworld, grafters, job holders, and business men seeking special governmental privileges and immunities. This army, by defeating Healy, Merriam, Deneen, and all other men of their type, had served notice upon all men who would rally the moral forces of the city for political action that they would be wasting their time and energy.

It had also been demonstrated that the loyalty of this army to Tony could not be shaken. This had been attempted by such powerful and dynamic leaders as Thompson and Crowe, but Tony had destroyed them and incorporated their armies into his own.

Having achieved these brilliant results, he had added greatly to his power and prestige by making himself Mayor of Chicago and leader of his party in the state. It seemed inevitable, therefore, that Tony and his army would soon rule Illinois as they ruled Chicago and Cook County.

Republican candidates would be confronted with the necessity of outbidding Tony for the support of the organized forces of vice and graft. Because of his long satisfactory record and the fact that he was in a position to deliver the goods, it would be impossible for anyone to make a better bid. Good men were unwilling to enter such a scramble, and others knew that it would be a waste of time and money.

The results were pathetic. With the exception of a few men who were ignored by the politicians and the press, the Republican entrants in the primary were insignificant and perennial job hunters and political weather vanes. They had no convictions on

any subject, and their position on public questions was the result of a guess as to what attitude would attract the largest number of votes and be most likely to land the speaker in the swivel chair and his name on a public pay roll. They were men who had nothing to lose and everything to gain. There was no fresh blood; there were no young men of vision and courage. There were no mature men who had demonstrated their capacity for effective leadership and unselfish public service. There was no honest presentation and candid analysis of facts; no courageous and constructive discussion of issues. There was simply a scramble for votes by pygmy politicians frightened out of their wits by Tony the Tammany ogre.

If any curious reader would like to ascertain what can happen to a great state in the short period of seventy years, let him read the Lincoln-Douglas debates and then examine the political reports in the newspapers of Illinois for the months of March and April, 1932.

At the primary election which was held on April 12, every candidate on the Tammany slate was nominated, and Tony became the absolute and unchallenged dictator of the Democratic Party of the state. Success at the

election in November would mean that he would own both United States senators, the Governor, and all other state officials. He also obtained control of the delegation to the national convention. With the votes of these dummies to be used as a club and for trading purposes, and with J. Ham as a pawn, Tony was now in a position to go into the convention and in alliance with the Tammany chiefs of other cities to force his political philosophy upon the Democratic Party of the nation.

### *The Democratic National Convention*

As the national campaign opened, it was apparent that as a result of the widespread and determined effort that was being made to secure the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment, prohibition would be the paramount issue. As Tony's chief concern had always been to defeat, repeal, or nullify all laws curtailing the liquor traffic, and as prohibition was the only question of a public nature about which he seemed to have any knowledge or convictions, the approaching campaign promised to give full scope to his statesmanship.

When in March the national House of Representatives rejected the proposed beer tax, Tony made it the occasion for telling the Democrats of the nation the position they

must take on the prohibition question. He said:

It is a good thing that the vote was taken. It resulted in a differentiation between the wets and the drys, showing the voters where their congressmen stand on the prohibition question.

It is my opinion that the Democrats must declare definitely where they stand. I believe also that every man who voted against the tax will go down to defeat, as also will the President of the United States.

If fifteen wet states, like Illinois, had continued to pay the taxes they did before prohibition, the federal government would have collected \$1,200,000 annually, plus the \$375,000,000 spent in trying to enforce the law.

Since prohibition Chicago has lost about \$150,000,000 in revenue from saloons, including the \$1,000 license fee for the latter and the licenses for restaurants, sale of tobacco and billiard parlors run in connection with them. Besides, the landlords have lost tenants and the buildings formerly occupied have decreased in value.

If the government obtains too much revenue from liquor taxes, it can suspend the income tax. Then manufacturers can produce goods cheaper than Europe can send them to this country, giving employment to our workers.

He then caused the Democratic Party of Illinois to insert in its platform a plank demanding the unconditional repeal of the

Eighteenth Amendment and the immediate modification of the Volstead Act. This was later to become famous as the "Illinois plank."

When the delegates to the Democratic National Convention began to assemble in Chicago, Tony had himself elected chairman of the Illinois delegation and Mike Igoe appointed as the Illinois member of the committee on resolutions. As a henchman of the old Sullivan and Brennan machines, Mike had for a generation been a noisy and vitriolic champion of the liquor interests. He was therefore well equipped to act as a sounding board for Tony's views on the liquor question.

The platform prepared by a subcommittee of the committee on resolutions, contained a plank favoring the submission to the states of the question of the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. Igoe demanded that the Illinois repeal and modification plank be substituted for this submission plank. The result was stated by the *Chicago Tribune* as follows:

The wringing wet policy was written into the proposed national platform after a majority of the subcommittee of nine which drafted the platform recommended a plank which would merely urge submission of repeal without committing the party itself to repeal. This plank was rejected by the committee by a vote of 35 to 18.

After stating that the wet plank movement was given its real start by Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin, the report continues:

These four states and Oregon began to stir up a revolt last Saturday in favor of the principles in a plank submitted by Michael L. Igoe of Illinois. It embodied the Illinois state plank. Sunday saw the dripping wet uprising against the merely damps growing. As the Easterners came in, Senator David I. Walsh of Massachusetts began conferences and by Tuesday night members of the resolutions committee from 24 states had signed up for the Walsh-Igoe plank.

It became a tidal wave when the resolutions committee finally got down to the prohibition question yesterday afternoon and the wets won overwhelmingly.

Texas, once dry as the desert, but recently cracked wet in its primaries, voted against the merely damp submission plank—and it passed its vote in the committee when the Walsh-Igoe sopping wet plank was adopted. That accounts for the difference of one vote in the two roll calls.

"The action of the committee," said Committee-man Igoe, "demonstrates that the party is keeping close to the people by adopting a policy which conforms to the popular will."

What Tony was doing behind the scenes during the days preceding the final action of the committee may never be known. There

can be no doubt that by means of propaganda, threats, promises, and deals he was doing everything in his power to force the adoption of the repeal plank. We do know, however, what Mike was doing publicly. He was baiting and insulting the men who appeared before the committee to oppose the repeal plank. His method is illustrated by his treatment of Dr. Ernest H. Cherrington of Delaware, Ohio, who appeared before the committee. I quote from the *Cincinnati Enquirer*:

"What's the title of doctor from?" Igoe asked.

"Two universities have seen fit to confer it on me," Cherrington answered.

Igoe and Cherrington engaged in repartee over the effect of national prohibition, and Igoe asked a series of questions designed to show that state prohibition could be obtained and enforced if the national prohibition amendment was obliterated. Then Igoe cracked his prize question:

"Don't you think the preachers of the churches would accomplish more if they would preach temperance and stay out of political conventions?" Prolonged applause followed and Hitchcock tried in vain for several minutes to restore order. Cries of "Boloney" and "Hurray for Mike Igoe" resounded through the hall.

Cherrington defiantly waited for silence and then said: "That's a matter of opinion. Part of the business of the church is to use its influence against social evils, and if you regard the liquor



traffic as a social evil, the churches are right in standing for prohibition." Hisses, cheers, cat calls and boos intermingled.

Some of the results of the action of the committee in rejecting the submission plank and making "repeal and modification" an article of party faith was described by the *New York Times* as follows:

The resolutions committee adjourned in an uproar. Senator Glass angrily left the hall and declared to several of his constituents who awaited him that the platform was "most unacceptable."

"Has the prohibition plank been finished?" he was asked.

"Yes, it has been finished," he replied, "and it may finish the Democratic Party. They have adopted a barroom plank."

Senator Hull sat gloomily in the midst of the discarded planks in the Rose Room of the Congress Hotel, where the resolutions committee held its meetings. He also told his colleagues that the prohibition plank, if it became a party pledge, gave promise of wrecking the party in November. He was very disconsolate, because he held that the platform had not adequately treated the economic questions or promised relief of distress.

"This is a culmination of four years of use of the Democratic organization, with affiliated organizations, equipped with vast moneys to quietly hand-pick many delegations and pack the Democratic National Convention with reference to the

anti-prohibition movement," Senator Hull said.

"No serious thought about the Democratic Party and vital panic and other public questions is permitted. The purpose is to take over bodily the Democratic Party and use it as a pack horse or agency solely to advance the cause of repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment."

John J. Raskob, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, and foe of prohibition, who had advocated the repeal of prohibition along the lines of the Morrow plan, declared that the plank adopted by the committee went too far and placed the party too strongly on the wet side.

He thought that the action had been taken too hastily and expressed the hope that the convention itself would soften some of the radical clauses of the majority plank.

The majority plank embraces most of the policies advocated by ex-Governor Smith, who had offered to the subcommittee the following suggestions on prohibition:

"We favor repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment, and we pledge our party in Congress to subject such repeal to state conventions for adoption. For immediate relief, we favor an amendment to the Volstead Act fixing a reasonable definition of alcoholic content so as to legalize light wines and beer."

The action of the committee was received with the greatest surprise by the delegates who crowded into the hotels after returning from the afternoon session of the convention. Some of them pronounced it the most astonishing thing

that has happened in the Democratic Party since the Civil War, and many of the anti-prohibitionists expressed the opinion that the party had taken too liberal a stand on this question.

However unsatisfactory this plan may have been to Senator Glass and Senator Hull and others, to Tony it seemed an expression of the highest statesmanship. It was a perfect embodiment of his political ideals and an exact expression of his political philosophy. It meant the immediate nullification of the Constitution by the modification of the Volstead Act and the lifting of the flood gates to the liquor traffic and its unlimited exploitation for profit. It meant the return of the brewery, the distillery, the wholesale liquor dealers associations, the old-fashioned saloon at the entrance to every factory and in every block of every city and village of the land, the free lunch, music, and the prostitute as stimulants to trade, bars at every dance hall and other places where boys and girls congregate for amusement, blue Monday, industrial accidents, broken homes, poverty, disease, despair, and the omnipotent liquor lobby controlling our politics from the smallest village to the national capitol. Tony knew that the pious promise to urge the states to promote

temperance and prevent the return of the saloon was merely a bait for dry suckers and would mean less than nothing if the amendment were repealed.

In apportioning the glory for this decisive victory, full credit should be given to the Tammany organizations of New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Connecticut, to their idol, Al Smith, and to the four years of relentless struggle by John J. Raskob, chairman and mortgagee of the Democratic National Committee and Wall Street gambler, who confessed that his sole object in going into politics was to "rid the country of the damnable affliction of prohibition," and whose ultimate object was to shift the burdens of taxation from the incomes of the rich to the wages of labor through a tax on a legalized and unrestricted liquor traffic. Much credit is also due to certain dripping wet newspapers of Chicago that sought to stampede the convention by a persistent campaign of ballyhoo, falsehood, and intimidation. Simple justice however, requires that the chief glory be awarded to Tony, for without the slightest doubt it was his command of the Illinois delegation and his overwhelming influence with the delegations of certain midwestern and other states that tipped the scales from the

side of submission to that of repeal and nullification.

Seventeen members of the committee on resolutions voted to submit to the convention as a substitute for the majority plank the following:

That the Congress immediately propose to truly representative conventions in the states, called to meet solely on the proposal, a repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment.

In the event of repeal, we urge that the Democratic Party coöperate in the enactment of such measures in the several states as will actually promote temperance, effectively prevent the return of the saloon and bring the liquor traffic under complete supervision and control by the states and that the federal government effectively exercise its power to protect states against importation of intoxicating liquors in violation of their laws.

By the adoption of this plank, the party would have abandoned the defense of the amendment and pledged itself to resubmit the whole matter to the states. It would have meant a complete defeat for the dries. But it was not wringing wet. It did not make repeal and nullification a matter of party faith. It enabled an honest dry to remain in the party and retain his self-respect. It did not

ram repeal and nullification down his throat and tell him to like it or get out of the party.

As this plank would have the support of such prominent Democrats as Senators Harrison, Bailey, Hull, King, Glass, Hitchcock and Wm. G. McAdoo, A. Mitchell Palmer and others, there was danger that it might be adopted by the convention.

In this final battle Tony took a heroic part. He was able to do this, not alone because of the fact that he had the third largest delegation to use for voting and trading purposes, but because he was able to a very large extent to control the cheers, demonstrations, boos, catcalls, and jeers of the thousands of visitors that packed the vast galleries of the stadium—a mob so lacking in a sense of decency that the convention could scarcely proceed except as it bowed to the dictates of that mob. As mayor, Tony controlled the Chicago police, and the police were in charge at the convention hall. When, therefore, a man appeared with a “courtesy ticket” signed by the mayor, he was admitted. In this way Tony put his rabble into the galleries. Mr. Willis J. Abbot, one of the most distinguished journalists in America, writing from the convention hall to the *Christian Science Monitor*, described the system as follows:

I encountered Charles R. Crane of Woods Hole and the wide, wide world in a hotel yesterday morning. "Did you ever see anything like that convention last night?" he asked. "It reminded me of scenes at the Court of Abyssinia, only worse. The King is used to tom-toms and long-horns, with an occasional ghost dance, but anything like that would have scared him into retirement. Seriously, I wonder if it does not portend the end of the convention system. Nobody could act with any semblance of reason in that bedlam. Perhaps the one hundredth anniversary may mark the end of the whole system."

I hardly think that will happen, however, much as it may be wished. But perhaps this convention will teach politicians not to hold these gatherings in cities like New York or Chicago. Invariably the delegates debate to the accompaniment of packed galleries, and invariably the galleries are packed in the interest of the least admirable faction in the party. The big cities are in the control of organized machines directed by politicians of the baser type. The present Mayor of Chicago was, until the advent of prohibition, the head of the United Societies, an organization consisting of distillers, brewers, and saloonkeepers, and having for its purpose the protection of liquor interests from hostile legislation, or from the enforcement of existing laws. Such a training, which covered most of Mr. Cermak's business life, scarcely fits a man to take a detached view of prohibition.

Wednesday night the galleries of the convention hall were crowded with men who shouted down the speakers who tried to head off the Democratic Party in its mad rush to prohibition repeal. Delegates could not get tickets for their wives. Public men of high standing and influence were denied admission to the hall. Persons who had bought tickets found them useless because of the crowds that blocked the doorways. And all because this Mayor of Chicago issued "courtesy tickets" bearing his signature which the police at the doorways accepted. How much this sort of influence had to do with the eleventh-hour shift of many delegates on the liquor question can only be guessed.

Chairman Walsh publicly recognized Tony's control of the galleries. On one occasion when Mr. McAdoo was endeavoring to address the convention, he was unable to proceed because of the long continued boos and catcalls. When the chairman pounded with his gavel and yelled for order, he was answered by boos and catcalls. Finally in despair he cried, "Mayor Cermak, I appeal to you for the power to control this convention." Tony went to the platform and, as the *Chicago Daily News* remarked, "The crowd did him the courtesy of withholding the raspberry until he had retired." When the boos continued, Mr. McAdoo said: "I thank the gal-



leries for the compliment they have paid me. And this convention wants to know, for the guidance of future Democratic conventions, whether or not this is the kind of hospitality that Chicago accords to its guests."

When the repeal and nullification plank was presented, this mob cheered wildly and staged a prolonged demonstration of approval. When, however, Senator Hull attempted to speak for the submission plank, he "was greeted with a chorus of growls and boos." The disorder was so great that it was simply impossible for him to get his argument across to the convention. His experience was so discouraging that the submissionists practically abandoned the struggle and went down in disastrous defeat.

Governor Roosevelt promptly approved the repeal and nullification plank, and Tony had the supreme satisfaction of seeing the central doctrine of his political faith accepted by his party and by its leading candidate for the nomination for the presidency of the United States.

Now that he had obtained everything he wanted and was certain that whoever received the nomination, his political philosophy would be acclaimed as the highest statesmanship and

the loftiest wisdom, Tony was in a position to look around and see what he could do for Tony. He no longer needed his eastern Tammany allies, and he saw no reason why he should go down with them in their sentimental devotion to the "happy warrior." So at the critical moment, when Mr. McAdoo had announced that the delegates from California and Texas had decided to vote for Roosevelt, Tony arose and announced that the delegates from Illinois and Indiana had decided to do the same thing, and it was "all over but the shouting." Leaving his old allies not only mad but looking foolish, Tony rushed to the airport, received the candidate as he descended from the clouds, and bore him in triumph to the ecstatic convention, and heard him declare that "from this hour the Eighteenth Amendment is doomed."

It has been said that Tony's action was not the result of any deal but was simply a bandwagon performance. No one who knows Tony will be simple-minded enough to believe any such thing. Both he and McAdoo knew precisely what they were to get if the party was successful at the election.

These striking achievements on the national stage brought to a dramatic climax thirty

years of unbroken political victories and placed Tony among the most influential statesmen and powerful leaders of the Democratic Party of America.

## *Chapter Eight*

### THE PATH TO GLORY

ON THE eve of the presidential election of 1860, another citizen of Illinois, who had entered the field of national politics, went to New York, and from the platform of the Cooper Union Institute made a declaration of his political faith. That faith was accepted by his state and his party, with the result that the Union was preserved and the cause of irritation between the states was removed, and to-day the people of both the North and South proclaim him our wisest statesman and our greatest national hero.

Not since 1860 has the nation entered a presidential campaign that was as fateful as the one of 1932. In 1860, Illinois offered the nation the leadership of Abraham Lincoln. In 1932, Illinois offered the nation the leadership of Tony Cermak, and his party accepted that leadership. It is important, therefore, that the people should know something more about him than the fact that he is the authentic voice of Illinois and an accepted leader of his party.

Everyone who has read *From Immigrant to Inventor*, by Michael Pupin, realizes that a penniless peasant from Central Europe can land upon our shores and seek out and ally himself with all that is best in American life and become an upright and useful citizen. The record of Tony Cermak shows that such a boy may take the opposite course and become a menace to our institutions.

### *Early Experiences*

When as a young man he went into politics, it was not as a student of political problems or as one interested in the welfare of his city or state. It was as a petty job-hunting, money-seeking cog in the sordid Roger Sullivan machine. He first became notorious through his activities in the "jack-pot" legislature of 1909 that elected William Lorimer, the corrupt Chicago boss, to the United States Senate. After an exhaustive investigation, the Senate expelled Lorimer on the ground that his election had been brought about by the bribery of Democratic members of the legislature. According to the testimony, the purchase of Democratic votes was engineered by Lee O'Neil Browne, the Democratic leader, by common consent one of the most corrupt and vicious men that ever occupied a seat in

the House. Cermak, a Democrat, and close associate of Browne, voted for Lorimer, the Republican boss. It has been repeatedly charged that he was paid for his vote, and he has never given any satisfactory reason why he, a Democrat, should vote for a Republican boss who was so notoriously corrupt that when Theodore Roosevelt was in Chicago, he refused to attend a public banquet, unless the invitation to that boss was canceled, although he was a member of the United States Senate.

### *Organizes the Underworld*

Tony next came into notoriety as Secretary of the United Societies. This was the high-sounding name of an organization formed for the purpose of establishing, by political coercion, a wide-open town and of securing for the underworld the license to operate in complete defiance of law and decency. Tony was its lobbyist and mouthpiece.

A few incidents may be cited as illustrating the nature of Tony's activities as head of this organization. On December 20, 1912, there was a public hearing on the merits of a proposed police reorganization ordinance. Tony appeared in the Council Chamber as lobbyist for the United Societies. One of the aldermen asked, "What is your society organized

for? You say you are organized for a purpose; tell us what that purpose is." His reply was as follows:

We are organized for the purpose of getting as liberal laws as we can. You know that we have state laws, providing that liquor shall not be sold between midnight and five o'clock in the morning, but we get permits for our dances that permit liquor being sold up to three o'clock in the morning. Then there is the one o'clock closing ordinance which is another violation of the state law. We do not want these laws enforced.

On December 23, 1912, the following editorial appeared in the *Chicago Evening Post*:

*What Is Law for?*

Cermak's superiority to law was evidenced in his effort to have revenge upon the aldermen who may vote for inspection of dance halls. He demanded special privilege, special exemption for his people and to get it he was willing to have the notorious dance hall evil go on absolutely unchecked in the police reorganization ordinance.

On the same day, the *Chicago Tribune* paid him this glowing tribute:

*Insolence*

The United Societies of Chicago have an extremely poor representative in Mr. Anton J. Cer-

mak, no matter what may be the opinion of the organization as to the merits of this gentleman.

Mr. Cermak, now unfortunately Bailiff of the Municipal Court, has represented the United Societies in politics for years. No one who has any knowledge of Mr. Cermak's activities in Springfield when he was a member of the Legislature or in the City Council of Chicago when he was an Alderman could be astonished by any insolence of speech or impertinence of threat or demand of which he might be guilty.

The liquor business not infrequently is insolent of speech, impertinent in demand, and dangerous in threat. Mr. Cermak is likewise.

Mr. Cermak, who appeared before the Council committee considering the police reorganization ordinance and threatened the aldermen who dared to insist upon the supervision of dance halls, was merely the same Cermak who in the Legislature fought the parole bill because it allowed a judge to put a drunkard who was ruining his life and destroying his family under pledge not to drink. . . .

Let the dance hall wreck as many lives as it will; let the miserable drunkard go headlong into the deepest gulf of misery; let him drag his wife and children after him; let every atrocity which can flow in the wake of drink go undisturbed, but don't dare touch a single privilege of the business which sells liquor.

On the next day, the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* took up the refrain:



When the United Societies permit their trade spokesman, Anton J. Cermak, to oppose in their name all efforts in the proposed police reorganization to improve law enforcement by the police, the general public finds in Chief McWeeny's remarkable suspension of the laws for the benefit of licentious revelers and those who profit by a pagan saturnalia, the inspiration of the United Societies. Do the police and the United Societies or the overwhelming majority of decent taxpayers rule Chicago?

The manner in which Tony, in advance of elections, pledged candidates of both parties to accept the dictation of the underworld, was beautifully illustrated by an incident that occurred in the fall of 1915.

The advocates and opponents of prohibition are now agreed as to the character of the saloons that existed in a city like Chicago. They were the regular headquarters of the vicious and criminal elements of the city. They swarmed with drunkards, degenerates, prostitutes, panderers, thieves, burglars, hold-up men, straw bondsmen, fixers, crooked policemen and politicians, and all other antisocial elements. They were foci from which spread a virulent infection to every part of the social body. Sunday, being a holiday, the youth, the laborers, the masses of the people, were on

the streets and having nothing to do, were constantly tempted to enter these saloons and contract habits of idleness, vice, and crime. They would spend their week's wages for drink and leave their families destitute and a public charge. On "blue Monday," they would go to work with unsteady hands and cause accidents that resulted in a large loss of property and life.

In growing numbers, good people who felt a sense of responsibility for the welfare of the city, were demanding that the law closing these places on Sunday be enforced. This demand became so widespread and insistent that at last it was heard even by a politician. On October 3, Mayor Thompson sent the following message to the City Council:

I have recently received communications from citizens of Chicago that liquor is sold in this city on Sunday in violation of the state laws. I referred these communications to the corporation counsel for an opinion as to what is the law in regard thereto.

He advises me that the state law provides that "whoever keeps open any tippling house or place where liquor is sold or given away upon the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday, shall be fined not exceeding \$200," and that the city ordinance permitting under certain restrictions

saloons or dramshops to remain open on Sunday does not and cannot nullify the state law.

This being the law, as I am advised, and it being my duty as mayor to take care, so far as lies within my power, that the law is faithfully executed in the city, I hereby direct that saloons or dramshops shall comply with the law and close on Sunday. And the city collector is hereby ordered to notify in writing all persons to whom he has issued licenses for saloons and dramshops that such persons must comply with the requirements of the state law.

(Signed) WILLIAM HALE THOMPSON,  
Mayor.

Immediately Tony published another document bearing the signature of William Hale Thompson. It was a pledge which Tony, as head of the United Societies, had extracted from Thompson prior to the mayoralty election. By this document Thompson had given his pledge to Tony that, if elected, he would oppose all blue laws, the law closing the saloons on Sunday, and all laws tending to abridge liberty for the individual on Sundays; that he would favor special bar permits until 3 A.M., and use his veto to defeat any ordinance that would curtail personal liberty or repeal the bar permit ordinance.

On a Sunday following, Tony led several thousand people who paraded down Michigan

Avenue in a protest against the enforcement of the Sunday closing law. A majority of the marchers were saloon keepers, bartenders, beer drivers, and ex-convicts. It is needless to add that Tony and his underworld legions were, as usual, victorious and the order was rescinded.

The manner in which Tony, as head of the United Societies, struggled desperately for over a quarter of a century to fill all the offices in the government of the city with men who could be depended upon to give the underworld a free hand is well illustrated by the facts set forth in an editorial which appeared in the *Chicago Daily News* during the aldermanic campaign of 1915:

In the list of candidates approved by the United Societies appear the names of Alderman Kenna of the First Ward; ex-Alderman Martin of the Fifth Ward; Alderman Cullerton of the Eleventh Ward; "Barney" Grogan of the Eighteenth Ward, and Alderman Jno. Powers of the Nineteenth Ward. No member of the old-time gray wolf pack who is a candidate at this election was overlooked. The United Societies have given their approval openly and brazenly to every candidate for alderman whose effort to be chosen to the city council is an offense to the community and a menace to the public welfare.

All who are acquainted with the facts know that this long and persistent struggle by Tony and his hordes has been the largest single factor in delivering Chicago into the hands of its criminal classes and in producing the conditions described by Mr. Loesch in the opening paragraph of this book.

### *Faithful to Old Friends*

When in 1922 Tony was elected president of the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, he entered upon a new phase of his career. This is a position of great power and enabled him to dispense on a large scale favors of a kind that were eagerly sought by certain thrifty and respectable inhabitants of the upper world. But before considering his activities in this higher sphere of usefulness, it is important to call attention to the fact that although he had gone up in the world, Tony remained loyal to his old friends and faithful to their interests and thus consolidated his positions and held every inch of ground that he had conquered. This is one of the most important elements of his present strength.

When William E. Dever was elected mayor in 1923, it soon became evident that he would make an honest effort to enforce the law. This threw the gangsters into a panic. They

soon recovered their composure, however, for they remembered that Tony was in control of the government of Cook County, which exercised jurisdiction over the territory adjoining Chicago. So they poured over the line into Cicero and other places in Cook County that were under the jurisdiction of the County Board. In his *Life of Al Capone*, Fred D. Pasley describes the gang opening in Cicero as follows:

Overnight Cicero seceded from the Volstead United States and went wilder West, and wilder wet, than Chicago.

"Cash game inside; step in," droned the capers for the Ship, into the ears of passengers alighting from elevated trains at the terminal station. It was right next door—a composite of Monte Carlo gambling palace and Barbary Coast dance hall—craps, poker, stuss and faro—and, from midnight until dawn, a ritzy cabaret. The experienced Billy Mondie was the proprietor.

There was the Hawthorne Smoke Shop, run by Frankie Pope, the millionaire newsboy, where the handbook play aggregated \$5,000 a day.

There was Lauterback's—a saloon in front, with whisky seventy-five cents the shot; beer thirty-five cents the stein; wine thirty cents the glass; and in the rear, catering to men and women, the roulette wheels. The game here was said to be the biggest in the country, as much as \$100,000

in chips being frequently stacked on the tables.

There were the Capone dog tracks and the Capone Castle, as ballyhooers on the rubberneck buses described it to sightseers—Cicero's largest hotel, which Capone had commandeered as headquarters.

In Stickney, adjoining Cicero on the south, were the brothels, the form of vice in which Torrio specialized, and which he had originally introduced to Chicago in his Burnham venture. Five hundred jezebels flocked to Stickney. There were houses with as many as sixty women, exceeding in size and number of inmates any establishment in Chicago in the days when Big Jim Colosimo cracked the whip for Hinky Dink and Bathhouse John in the old First Ward levee district.

A Capone-Torrio agent was posted in each gambling den, saloon, and brothel. So thoroughly organized was the combine and so autocratic were its methods that the proprietors had to pay the salaries of the agents, whose jobs were to see that the places received protection and that the combine got its split. This varied from twenty-five to fifty per cent of the gross receipts. By mid-summer of 1924 Capone and Torrio were each pocketing \$100,000 a week. These figures are those of government investigators.

An incident chosen at random will further illustrate Tony's continued loyalty to his old

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<sup>1</sup> Pasley, Fred D., *Al Capone, the Biography of a Self-Made Man*, pp. 39, 40, 41. Ives-Washburn, Publishers.

friends. In 1925, Peter M. Hoffman, a stalwart Republican politician, was Sheriff of Cook County. He permitted Terry Druggan and Frankie Lake, two Capone gangsters who were confined in the county jail, to motor around the city and live most of the time in a luxurious apartment. Federal Judge James H. Wilkerson sent Hoffman to jail for thirty days for this conduct, and everybody thought that his political career was ended. But Tony, the Democratic president of the County Board, made Hoffman assistant chief forester of the forest preserves at a salary of \$10,000 a year.

### *Tony Makes His Bow in the Upper World*

But let us leave the murky atmosphere of the underworld and follow Tony as he emerges upon his new field of action with its wider opportunities. His predecessor as president of the County Board was Peter Reinberg, an honest man who served the public to the best of his ability. Under his administration the county government was comparatively free from graft.

Soon after Tony's administration got into its stride, rumblings of dishonesty and graft began to be heard. The first explosion came in the fall of 1926 when the Citizens' Asso-



ciation issued a bulletin calling attention to the manner in which the affairs of the Board were being conducted. This organization was formed in the period following the great fire by a number of the leading citizens of Chicago. It is not only, as its literature states, "The Oldest Civic Reform Organization in America," but it is one of the most effective and useful. It commands universal confidence and respect. It maintains a secretary who gives his entire time to watching, investigating, and reporting upon the activities of all the governing agencies within the Chicago area. His investigations are required to be exhaustive, his reports scrupulously accurate, and they must be submitted to the board of directors before they are made public.

As I shall quote from one of its bulletins, I will say a word about its present secretary and attorney, Shelby M. Singleton. A number of years ago, I held the position of secretary and attorney of the association and when I resigned, I was asked to help select my successor. I found that Mr. Singleton was a member of the bar, had had a wide newspaper experience, was intelligent, careful, courageous, and a man of the highest character. For a period of nearly thirty years, he has given the people of Chicago ac-

curate information in regard to the activities of public officials. He is rightfully regarded as one of Chicago's effective and useful citizens.

The Board of Commissioners of Cook County is also the Board of Commissioners of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. The president can veto any ordinance of the board, and this veto can be overcome only by a unanimous vote of the other members.

The bulletin of the Citizens' Association, which was issued on September 30, 1926, was in part as follows:

The Citizens' Association desires to call the attention of its members and of the public to a very large waste of public funds by the Forest Preserve Commissioners of Cook County in acquiring forest lands. In the purchase of about forty tracts which we have investigated, such waste has apparently amounted to at least \$1,250,000. From statements made to us by many former owners of such tracts it seems clear that such waste could have been avoided by buying directly from those owners, who say that the District made virtually no effort to deal with them.

As these purchases total less than 4,000 acres, which is only about one-third of the total acreage bought by the District during the years 1921-26, the entire sum wasted in land purchases by the

Forest Preserve District during that period is probably much larger than the amount above-mentioned. The interests of the public appear to have been properly protected in making such purchases during the administration of the late Peter Reinberg, as president of the County Board, but after his death, early in 1921, laxity developed and middlemen began reaping excessive profits. . . .

### *Some Recent Examples*

While the purchases which we have examined have been made at different times during the last six years (the exact number of years Tony had been president of the Board), some of the most outrageous instances of the squandering of the taxpayers' money have occurred during the present year. As our inquiry has covered so much ground that it is impracticable to attempt in the space of a single report to business men to give details regarding each of the numerous purchases that we have investigated, we have selected, for the information of our members, the following purchases in which the transactions were fairly typical of those which we have found to have taken place, to the disadvantage of the public, in many others:

### *The Lewis Institute Tract*

On January 9, 1926, according to records in the office of the County Recorder, the Lewis Institute sold to Thomas C. Stobbs of Harvey, a sixty-four-acre tract in Thornton Township, described in the

deed as "that part lying Southwest of River of the S. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 5, Township 36, Range 14," for the sum of \$80,041. This was at the rate of about \$1,250 per acre. The property was conveyed to Stobbs by a deed executed by Mr. Bernard A. Eckhart, as Vice President of Lewis Institute, and by Dr. James B. Herrick, its Secretary.

On March 15, 1926, *only nine weeks later*, this same tract was purchased from Stobbs by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County for the sum of \$159,750, *an increase of almost \$80,000*.

Payment was made by a check for \$159,750 on the Foreman National Bank, in which the Forest Preserve District keeps its main checking account. The price paid for the property by the Forest Preserve District was \$2,500 per acre, just twice what Stobbs had paid for it in January. The tract had been offered for sale to the District within about a week of the time he acquired title.

This instance is typical of the others set out in the bulletin, and illustrates the technique that had been developed in connection with this form of graft.

Three years later the Better Government Association issued a bulletin calling the attention of the public to the wholesale manner in which the County Board was stealing the taxpayers' money. Its criminal transactions were set out at length and with damning par-

ticularity. The following are some of the statements contained in this bulletin:

A CONTRACTORS' RING  
CROOKED LABOR LEADERS AND MEMBERS OF THE  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS IN COL-  
LUSIVE CRIMINAL ARRANGEMENT TO  
ROB THE COUNTY TREASURY

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*Bulletin A in re County Board*

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ONE OF THE REASONS FOR HIGH TAXES  
EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF H. J. KUELLING,  
HIGHWAY ENGINEER FOR WISCONSIN, OF SUR-  
VEY OF CONTRACTS LET IN 1927 BY THE  
BOARD OF COOK COUNTY COMMIS-  
SIONERS FOR HARD ROADS IN  
COOK COUNTY

The table on page two considers twenty-six of a total of forty-eight contracts analyzed in Mr. Kuelling's report of December 24, 1927. In each case it shows the contract price, engineer's estimate, and the percentage under the estimate.

The law provides that no contractor's estimate shall be considered which is above the published engineer's estimate. The contractors know this and yet when the bids were opened for the first contract, there was only one bid below the engineer's estimate. This was found to be the case when the bids were opened for every one of the forty-eight contracts. The contractors might just as well have agreed among themselves who was



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*J. Ham and John F. Curry*



to receive the next contract, and as a matter of fact, it seems clear that they did have such an understanding. Such an arrangement could not have just happened and is an indication of criminal collusion among the contractors which was at least permitted by the County Board and calls for thorough Grand Jury investigation of this and the charge that there exists a combination of contractors, the County Board, and crooked agents, who have worked themselves into temporary control of some labor unions. When Mr. Kuelling submitted his sixty-eight page report, copy of which we have, he said informally, "What you need is not an engineer, but a Grand Jury." (We went to Wisconsin and saw Mr. Kuelling, confirming this report.)

A one-time employee of the County Board estimates a criminal waste of four million dollars in spending the fifteen-million-dollar bond issue for hard roads. The first business of an honest Board of County Commissioners is to establish open and fair competition in the letting of public contracts.

In conclusion, the bulletin calls attention to the bulletin of the Citizens' Association above referred to and to a number of the instances of graft which that bulletin had exposed in connection with the purchase of land for the Forest Preserve by the County Board. After setting out the circumstances of the purchase of a tract of land from the Snell Estate, the



bulletin of the Better Government Association says:

The Citizens' Association estimates that the county could have bought this property direct from the Snell Estate at a saving of approximately \$50,000. A summary of what the county might have saved through correct business methods on the purchases on that one day, March 15, 1926, is as follows:

Lewis Institute Tract.....	\$ 80,000
Miller-Seyforth Tract.....	30,000
Schindler Tract .....	11,000
Snell Tract.....	50,000

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Someone's profit out of the County Treasury .....	\$171,000
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In this connection, the gentle reader will recall that it was in 1931, after Tony had held his position for a period of eight years, that the Chicago correspondent of the *New York Nation* wrote:

Although Chicago's new mayor has never held a job that paid him more than \$12,000 a year, he is worth to-day more than \$7,000,000, according to the private estimates of several of his supporters in the mayoralty campaign.

The gentle reader will also recall that it was in 1928 when "Big Bill" was mayor of

Chicago and Tony had been president of the County Board and in control of Cook County for six years, that Frank J. Loesch made his visit and presented his petition to Al Capone because, as he said, "It did not take me long after I had been made president of the Crime Commission to discover that Al Capone ran the city. His hand reached into every department of the city and *county government*."

Men who had followed the situation closely believe that at this time Tony should have been indicted for conspiracy to defraud the county and sent to the penitentiary, and that this would have been his fate if it had not been for the strength of his bipartisan alliances and the fact that, as president of the County Board, he controlled the purse strings of the State's Attorney's office.

### *Chicago's Dilemma*

For more than a generation, the people of Chicago had known the truth about Cermak. They knew that from the very beginning he had been a henchman of Roger Sullivan and George Brennan; that he had been constantly engaged in the type of political activity which their names symbolized; that his whole personality had been formed in the atmosphere of graft and public betrayal; that he had been

the impudent mouthpiece of the forces of lawlessness and degeneracy and they knew that the leopard had not changed his spots. But in 1931 he had "muscled" himself into a position where they had to support either him or Thompson for mayor. Thompson had bankrupted, disgraced, and humiliated the city, and it had achieved a reputation throughout the world that threatened with failure the plans that were being made for the Exposition that was to celebrate a century of progress. The people were desperate. Something had to be done. There was this difference between the two candidates: Big Bill had performed under a spotlight and used a trumpet, while Tony had worked under cover and talked in whispers. Tony's real character, therefore, was unknown to the outside world and probably would not be discovered in time to affect the Exposition. Therefore, they put Tony in the cellar, fixed up a dummy for campaign purposes, raised a hue and cry against Thompson; but after the election, it was the real Tony that sat down in the Mayor's chair.

Large numbers of the best people in Chicago chose this horn of the dilemma with entire sincerity. But there were many intelligent, public-spirited, and courageous citizens who, in the face of misunderstanding,

sneers, and abuse, dared to face the facts without flinching and to proclaim the grim truth—that tragic as the reelection of Thompson would be, it would be infinitely more tragic in the long run should Chicago be turned over to Tony Cermak and his rapacious machine.

*The Better Government Association Speaks Out*

Among those who resolutely faced the stark realities of the situation were the members of the Better Government Association of Chicago. For years this organization had been engaged in a desperate warfare against Thompson and his gang, but in 1931 it refused to indorse Cermak even to defeat Thompson, but instead issued a statement of facts in regard to the two candidates. The facts in regard to Cermak that are set forth in this statement constitute one of the most terrific indictments that any disinterested and responsible body of men had ever presented against an aspirant for an important public office.

As I shall quote at length from this indictment, it is necessary that I should give some account of the history, objectives, and leadership of this organization.

The activities of the Citizens' Association

were strictly limited to the work of furnishing information. It did not enter the political arena and attempt to defeat the crooks it had exposed. The Municipal Voters' League adopted a different course. It was organized to purge the city council of its grafters, and it investigated, published the facts, gave names, dates and places, and then, with all the energy of a forest fire, it went into the aldermanic elections to defeat the grafters it had exposed. The manner in which this organization, under the brilliant and powerful leadership of George E. Cole, Hoyt King, Walter Fisher, John M. Harlan and others, transformed the "old gray wolf" council of the 1890's into the honest and representative body of the early 1900's, forms one of the most inspiring and romantic chapters in the political history of Chicago. There were giants in those days!

By 1923, men who were not beneficiaries of the spoils system of politics and who had the intelligence to see and the courage to face facts, knew that Chicago was moving toward the abyss. The work of organizing job hunters, privilege seekers, grafters, and the underworld had proceeded with such remorseless thoroughness and efficiency that Chicago's Tammany had not only risen to a position of great power itself, but by compelling Repub-

licans to enter into competition with it for the support of the same elements, it had driven decent and honest men from the leadership of the party. Thompson was mayor and the city government was a seething mass of corruption. Crowe was State's Attorney and that great office was being used to build up a political machine. Peter Reinberg, the honest president of the County Board, had been succeeded by Tony Cermak, the representative and spokesman of the underworld and the arch representative of spoils politics, and the work of Tammanyizing the county government was well under way. Good citizens were confused, discouraged, and demoralized.

Republican and Democratic politicians ignored the information furnished by the Citizens' Association and other reform organizations. They gave to the simple-minded good citizens rhetoric, fake promises, and other forms of "bunk" and devoted their real and sincere efforts to the work of securing the support of Chicago's political realists, the privilege seekers, the grafters, and the underworld. The Municipal Voters' League confined its efforts to aldermanic elections. The situation, therefore, cried aloud for disinterested, public-spirited, and courageous citizens who would organize to obtain full informa-

tion as to all public officials and to make vigorous and effective use of that information—men who, with fire and sword would go into every political contest and fight to defeat crooks and elect good men to office. It was in response to this imperative civic demand that the Better Government Association was formed. A group of men who were not office seekers or the beneficiaries of spoils politics, men who were free and fearless, came together and decided that to the best of their ability they would undertake this difficult and distasteful task. They realized that they would incur the wrath of the politicians, the grafters, and the underworld and that the parasitic spokesman of these elements would maliciously misinterpret their acts and hurl at them lies, insults, and vituperation; but they also knew that this had been the fate of the men who, in every age, had dared to challenge the intrenched forces of vice, privilege, and greed.

The leader of this group of men has been E. J. Davis, one of the most valiant champions of the cause of honest and efficient government that has appeared in any American city. The most valid ground of hope for Chicago's future is the fact that it can still produce a civic leader of the type and stature of E. J.

Davis. It was my good fortune to come into contact with him frequently during a period of over twenty years. I have seen him at the council table and in the political trenches, and I have seen him "go over the top" in the face of exploding hand grenades and machine gun and artillery fire. He is a man of penetrating and realistic intelligence, absolute integrity, and unswerving devotion to the cause of civic righteousness. If the time ever comes when the press dispatches from Chicago tell of the words and deeds of men of this type rather than of the type of Tony Cermak, J. "Ham" Lewis, "Big Bill" Thompson, Bob Crowe, Fred Britten, and Al Capone, it will be safe to conclude that the day of her redemption has dawned.

But there is testimony as to the character of the man and the quality of his leadership that is far more impressive than any that I can give. He was one of the leaders in the movement to rid Chicago of Bob Crowe and was one of the powerful factors in accomplishing that result. In recognition of the part he took in that fight, eighty-three of the leading business men, judges, lawyers, educators, and philanthropists of Chicago acted as hosts at a dinner given in his honor at the Union League Club. An account of this din-



ner was given in an editorial in the *Christian Century*, which is published in Chicago and is recognized as one of the outstanding organs of liberal religious and political thought in America. It said:

We have long wished that adequate recognition might be made of the services which Mr. E. J. Davis has rendered the cause of good government in Chicago. Day in and day out, year after year, in the face of defeat, apathy, and appalling civic irresponsibility, Mr. Davis has toiled ahead to free his city from the control of spoilsmen and their allies. . . . Beneath the defeat of the plunderbund in the recent Illinois primary—and particularly beneath the defeat of the discredited State's Attorney Crowe—there lay years of herculean effort by Mr. Davis and his organization. Now that the victory has been won, a newspaper is doing what it can to claim the credit; but those who watched the fight from its inception know that if honor was due any one more than another, that one was E. J. Davis. On the night of May 8, as representative a group of the city's leaders as has ever met, attended a dinner at the Union League Club in honor of this dauntless reformer. The public recognition thus accorded him was as genuine as it was unstinted. When the roll of the worthy servants of Chicago, and of American good government in general, is made up, the period of the last decade must contain, high on the list, the name of E. J. Davis.

The character of the many tributes that were paid to Davis is illustrated by the following excerpts from two of them. Harry E. Kelley, who had been president and for many years chairman of the Public Affairs Committee of the Union League Club, said:

I found that he was a great, shrewd, planning political leader, of a high order, that any community might feel proud to possess. . . . I regard him as a great man, an honest man, a courageous man, a man of great zeal, and a man as nearly always right as any of us get.

Frank J. Loesch paid him the following tribute:

Mr. Davis is a man who has a remarkable grasp of facts; he puts those facts before you. When I found myself at odds with him, as I have at times, and sat down and discussed with him the problems, I have found that he knew a great deal more on the subject than I did from the fund of information that his wide experience gathered. . . . I pay the highest compliment to any man when I say that Mr. Davis is a man among men of such honesty and integrity that you can tie to him without a question of doubt that he will lead you right.

For years, Davis and the other members of the Better Government Association had fought Tony at such close quarters that they

could see the white of his eyes and were thoroughly familiar with his record from the day he entered politics. They did everything in their power to induce the Democratic Party to nominate an outstanding man for the position of mayor, and when it gave the nomination to Tony, the association declined to endorse him. This action was all the more significant in view of the fact that on a former occasion, this association had issued the following statement in regard to Thompson:

It appearing from the press that the candidacy of William Hale Thompson for reelection as mayor of Chicago is being launched and that an organized and widespread effort is being made to secure petitions in his behalf, it becomes pertinent to refresh the public's memory as to the circumstances under which his administration came to an inglorious end less than two years ago, in a flood of indictments and prosecutions extending into almost every department of public service, thus leaving the impression upon the public mind of:

1. General inefficiency, systematic grafting, and neglect of public business in all departments of the city service.

2. The debauching of the public schools and humane institutions of the city, culminating in the arrest and indictment of the president and

other members of the school board and employees.

3. The scandals in the Department of public works, including the extortionate fees of so-called "real estate experts" and vast sums paid to contractors for work never performed and for materials never delivered, resulting again in indictments even at the hands of a friendly prosecutor.

4. The demoralization and corruption of the Police Department, resulting in a reign of terror throughout the city from organized criminal gangs and the open operation of black and tan resorts and gambling dens from which the city still suffers.

5. The looting of the police and fire pension funds.

6. The oppression and robbery by enforced contributions from legitimate business by hordes of inspectors and political workers promoting fake fairs, expositions, benefits, and catch-penny enterprises.

7. The political assassination of honest and independent aldermen and the wholesale stealing of elections while the election machinery was in the administration's hands.

8. The sale of public offices and the bribery of the public officials and the prostitution of the courts and prosecuting agencies.

9. The deliberate deception of the people by false economic issues and political masquerades to the delay of the proper solution of our transportation problem.

10. The brazen attempt to capture the judici-

ary of Cook County, prevented only by the uprising of decent citizens.

In view of these notorious facts, the Better Government Association urges its members and all other citizens jealous of the good name of Chicago not to sign these petitions.

Fully realizing that Thompson was a man of this character, the members of the Better Government Association believed that his election would prove to be less of a menace to the city than would the election of Cermak. Prior to the election, therefore, it issued the following statement to the voters of Chicago:

SHALL CHICAGO HAVE A TAMMANY MAYOR?  
IS CHICAGO LIABLE TO JUMP INTO THE FIRE IN  
AN EFFORT TO GET OUT OF THE FRYING PAN?

The forthcoming mayoralty election confronts Chicago with a serious situation. Thousands of people are discouraged, others disappointed, and multitudes of voters are planning to remain away from the polls because they are in a state of mental confusion as to the merits and demerits of the two leading candidates.

The Better Government Association anticipated this very situation more than a year ago and made urgent proposals to various civic and business organizations and leaders who should hold the welfare of the city at heart to put forth a program that would insure the candidacy of some public-spirited business man who was independent of

political alliances. The Association was invited to put forward a program looking to the accomplishment of the nomination and election of such a candidate.

The Association prepared and presented such a plan to various leaders and groups in many conferences, but was unable to get unanimity of purposeful action. Some strange apathy or fear seemed to have laid hold upon many of our civic and business leaders, and the matter was allowed to drift until the politicians maneuvered the city into the position where now we have two machine politicians as candidates.

Bad as the situation is, the Better Government Association does not believe that the loyal citizens of Chicago have the right to wash their hands of the matter.

It is an unhappy alternative that faces the city, but we must deal with the present dilemma somehow and then take necessary steps to prevent the recurrence of such a disaster in the future.

The friends of the Better Government Association are urging us to put forth a statement which might serve to assist them in their decision. In an effort to comply with this request, we are setting forth this brief summary of the records of the leading candidates and the situation as we see it. . . .

### *Credits in Cermak's Record*

Built one thousand miles of concrete road.

Built twenty-six bridges on county highways.

Increased forest preserve from 25,000 acres as it was when Peter Reinberg left it, to 32,000 acres in 1930.

Built new Criminal Court and Jail Buildings at Twenty-sixth and California Avenue.

Built new Nurses' Home.

Increased the amount paid out of the public treasury for public welfare work.

Maintained against strenuous opposition the efficiency program initiated by Charles S. Peterson effecting thereby a large annual savings in the cost of issuing tax bills.

### *Liabilities in Cermak's Record*

Aggressively opposed throughout his career the moral and spiritual interests of Chicago, Cook County, and Illinois.

As secretary of the United Societies, he has a long record as the ruthless leader of the saloon and brewery overlords in Cook County before the Eighteenth Amendment.

The orderly use of liquor may be one question, but the debauching of boys and girls is quite another matter, and yet Cermak was the chief sponsor and defender for years of the special bar permit ordinance under which liquor was sold in several hundred public dance halls to young boys and girls until three o'clock in the morning in deliberate defiance of state law closing liquor resorts at 1 A.M. and forbidding liquor sales to minors.

Cermak resisted every attempt of the Juvenile

Protective Association and others to repeal this ordinance. Committees composed of leading citizens reported to the City Council that they had seen liquor freely dispensed by minors to minors in these places; girls lying drunk on the floors of the main ballrooms, and they charged that the ordinance was responsible for the debauching of thousands of boys and girls.

This made no difference to Cermak, and he determinedly fought on every occasion the repeal of this infamous ordinance.

He aggressively opposed every attempt of the Mayor, Council, or police to regulate or restrict saloons, breweries, dance halls, and disorderly resorts with their attendant evils. He fought for a wide-open town with unrestricted saloon domination.

Speaker of the House in the General Assembly, Edward D. Shurtleff, accused Cermak of buying votes for United States Senator when Lorimer was elected.

Representative Charles A. White accused Cermak of being paid for his vote for Lorimer for United States Senator.

Gambling, disorderly houses, bootlegging, road houses, and vice syndicates through Cook County up to the present time have been protected under Cermak's administration of the County Board.

Sinister use of public money and public patronage to promote his personal political machine.

Ruthless overlordship of private business and public officials to further his own private and public interests.



Promotion of bipartisan deals which destroy party responsibility and administration efficiency.

Cermak always fought Women Suffrage.

Located Criminal Court Building at such inaccessible spot as to play directly into the hands of politics and crime.

*Waste of Public Funds under Cermak's  
Administration*

While Cermak built one thousand miles of hard roads in Cook County during his administration, he paid approximately \$5,000 per mile in excess of the cost of the state roads in Cook County with identical specifications and conditions, making approximately a five-million-dollar waste to taxpayers.

Unnecessary hard roads built to promote real estate interests and political favors.

H. J. Kuelling, highway engineer of Wisconsin, and one of the best road engineers in the United States, was employed by the Association of Commerce to investigate hard road building by the Cook County Commissioners under Cermak in 1927. He said informally when he sent in his sixty-eight-page report, "What you need is not an engineer, but a Grand Jury."

Haskins & Sells, employed by the Association of Commerce in 1929 to investigate hard road building by the Cook County Commissioners under Cermak, reported July 18, 1930, showing a waste in the highway department of \$1,670,000 and thereby confirmed the Kuelling report.

Excessive cost of bridges and building unnecessary bridges. For example, one at Twenty-sixth Street across the Des Plaines River on an unimproved road and difficult even to find. There is a bridge at Twenty-second Street and another at Thirty-first Street at the Zoölogical Gardens. The one at Twenty-sixth Street is unnecessary and appears to benefit only a real estate development.

Purchases of land for Forest Preserves through dummies at greatly excess cost to the taxpayers. Citizens' Association in 1926 in Bulletin No. 69 said that in forty tracts they had investigated such waste amounted to at least \$1,250,000.

Paid eighty-three cents per cubic foot for constructing the Criminal Court and Jail Buildings, which is more than twice as much as they should have cost. They are defective in many respects. Particularly there was no provision made for heating so that it was necessary to bring heat from the Bridewell heating plant.

### *The Main Question Is*

Do the citizens of Chicago want to place all of the political power in Chicago and Cook County and most of the power in Illinois in the hands of one man and build up here a worse than Tammany Hall?

Even if Cermak should resign as president of the County Board, he would select his own successor. He does not get his power from being president of that Board, but as chairman and boss of the Democratic machine.

*Cermak Already Has Ominous Power*

He is the successor of George Brennan and Roger Sullivan as chairman of the Democratic County Committee which makes him the dictator and boss of the Democratic machine.

No man or woman can be a successful candidate for the Democratic nomination without Cermak's O.K. He dominates through his power as party boss, the patronage and control of the County Board, County Treasurer, Board of Election Commissioners, County Judge, Coroner, County Superintendent of Schools, Board of Assessors, Bailiff and Clerk of the Municipal Court and the Sheriff's office.

Efforts are being made at Springfield to give him full power over the Board of Review, as well as the Board of Assessors.

As Democratic boss and Mayor he would designate in what banks nearly one and one-half billion dollars would be deposited during the next four years and what banks would handle the city, county, and sanitary district funds.

*Controls Judges*

No Democratic judge will be renominated and no new Democratic candidate for judge can have the nomination without Cermak's O.K. It would also be difficult for any of the Republican judges to maintain themselves against his opposition because of his bipartisan power and influence. A humiliating spectacle was the trekking of Republican as well as Democratic judges to do obeisance

to him before the last bipartisan agreement for the election of judges.

*Dictates South Park Commissioners*

He has an outstanding voice in selecting South Park Commissioners and any office that he does not control outright he influences through bipartisan alignments.

*Took Mayoralty Nomination for Himself*

He turned down A. A. Sprague, Clayton F. Smith, John S. Clark, Judge McCrorty, Judge Sullivan and Dr. Bundesen and took the Democratic nomination for Mayor himself, notwithstanding the fact that he had just a few months before been elected to an important office for four years.

*Would Control the Election Machinery and Police Department*

If elected Mayor, he would retain all of the foregoing power and have added to it the control of the Police Department, thereby controlling all of the election machinery and have undisputed control of elections. With the control of all offices in his hands, who would guard the polling places? Also, *with the control of the Police Department, where and how do the decent citizens who are advocating Cermak's election expect the polling places to be guarded?*

### *What Hope Left?*

The one thread of hope to prevent dictatorial and oppressive power being centralized in this man's hand would be what the people might do at the elections next year, but we have already reviewed his autocratic control of all departments of the election machinery and whether or not the people's will was allowed to express itself at the polls would be entirely dependent upon his benevolence. In this connection, it is well to bear in mind that Cermak has been and is now in position to crush out organized vote frauds. As President of the County Board and as boss of the Democratic Party, he could have coöperated with Judge Jarecki in preventing wholesale frauds at the April primaries and in preceding elections.

### *No Appropriation to Loesch to Prosecute Vote Frauds*

Election frauds do not just happen. They take place because political bosses are determined to carry elections at all hazards and organize deliberately to carry elections by fraud. His administration refused to appropriate money for the Loesch investigation of vote frauds and did not give that investigation the sanction of an official investigation backed up by an organization of which he was president, and which, as a public-spirited citizen, he should have loyally supported.

He would also control the School Board, Civil Service Commission, Board of Local Improvements, Corporation Counsel, Building Depart-

ment and many other departments of local government.

*Would Take Over State's Attorney's Office*

If elected Mayor, he would immediately organize his force to capture the one remaining powerful office in the county, the State's attorneyship, and would put a henchman of his own in control of that office.

*Controls Forty-four Votes in the Legislature*

Further than this, there are forty-four Democrats, members of the Legislature from Cook County, who could not hold their positions without his O.K., and therefore will vote on all major questions as he directs. This would give him practically control over legislation and permit him to organize most of the political power in the State and give him great advantage in electing the Governor and the United States Senator in 1932 and might affect the Presidency.

*Will We Help Matters by Jumping into the Fire in Trying to Get Out of the Frying Pan?*

There are evidences of a new and better leadership for the Republican Party in Chicago and Cook County in an able and public-spirited group of young men who are working intelligently for a reorganization of local government on a sound and wholesome basis.

Now in the public's eagerness to hasten the de-

parture of unworthy leaders, there is danger of establishing an infinitely worse condition under a ruthless Chicago Tammany, closing the doors to this new leadership.

We must maintain two parties in opposition to one another.

If the people of Chicago deliberately place in Cermak's hand by electing him Mayor, practically all the power in Cook County, they will be trusting for good or evil to one man, more power than the people anywhere in this country have ever placed in the hands of one man.

If the people are going to trust one man with this vast power, it is vitally important that he should be a man of probity of character and of unusual public spirit. The voters should ponder carefully whether or not Cermak's record shows that he is worthy of such great responsibilities.

The position taken in this campaign by Rev. A. M. Pennewell, one of the leading clergymen of Chicago, illustrates the attitude of citizens who refused to listen to party slogans, to be deceived or intimidated, to help put over an alibi or to run with the pack. He faced and proclaimed the grim realities of the situation without flinching. In a radio address delivered during the campaign he said:

The Citizens Committee of Ten Thousand has asked me to tell for whom I shall vote for Mayor and why. It is with great reluctance that I vote

for either of the two major candidates. Neither of them represents my civic ideals. However, as a citizen of Chicago, I cannot run away from making a choice. . . . I shall vote for Mr. Thomson for three reasons: First, because I think he is far less dangerous to my civic ideals than Mr. Cermak; second, because I think if Thompson is elected we will have a chance to make a change in four years. If Mr. Cermak, with his vast political organization and power is elected, he cannot be overthrown in fifteen years; third, I think the election of Mr. Cermak would create a ruthless political machine which would dominate the politics of the State of Illinois and be a dangerous influence in national affairs.

The newspapers have given us a life-sized portrait of Thompson duly distorted for campaign purposes. They have given us a highly touched up picture of Cermak. We shall take a glimpse of the real Cermak.

CRIME—Last summer I was a member of the Chicago Church Federation Crime Committee and had a look behind the scenes. Crime in Chicago is appalling. My conviction is that the crime situation in Cook County, outside of Chicago, is as bad or worse than in the city of Chicago. Cook County is Mr. Cermak's province, and there you will find the grand headquarters of Al Capone, from which he carries on his extensive campaign of lawlessness. There is no record of Mr. Cermak's offering a single protest against bandit Capone's activities. Capone's dog tracks were run under injunction by Judge Fisher, Cermak's



henchman. I have before me a list of two hundred roadhouses in Cook County licensed by Mr. Cermak, many of the owners being of the toughest crooks in the county. Never in the history of Cook County has it been so overrun with slot machines, prostitutes, bootleggers, and racketeers as during the administration of Mr. Cermak. Mr. Cermak has 500,000 people under his administration.

GRAFT—Exposures of graft during recent years have been in the County Board, Forest Preserve, and Sanitary District, which are the peculiar domains of Mr. Cermak. Mr. Cermak has an interesting habit of breaking down when confronted with graft in his administration and calling for an advisory committee of highly respectable citizens to help him cover up. On December 8, 1928, the Better Government Association sent a letter to the County Board, of which Mr. Cermak is chairman, asking for the privilege of examining their books. Mr. Cermak promptly broke down and sent his man Newby to the Association of Commerce and begged them to make the examination before the Better Government Association got at it. I quote from the *Chicago Tribune* of July 18, 1930:

“A Citizens’ Survey Committee of the Chicago Association of Commerce, headed by Wm. R. Dawes, reported to the County Board yesterday that the Board’s highway expenditures from January 18, 1927, to June 30, 1929, were \$1,677,000 in excess of a reasonable cost for the construction

and maintenance of county roads. It was also found that "dummy" bids curtailed competition in the award of contracts, that materials were purchased without advertising for bids, that low bids were rejected for unrecorded reason and that funds were spent for other than their intended purpose."

Mr. Cermak's grief on account of these little errors was so moving that the Association of Commerce was moved to coöperate with him in an advisory committee rather than reporting the steals to a grand jury and demanding his prosecution. Nothing has been done about this steal of public funds revealed by the Association of Commerce. If Mr. Cermak confesses that he did not know these things were being done under his administration, he is a simpleton unworthy of his high office. If he did know of it, he is a common crook and should have been indicted. He could not help knowing it for he had to O.K. orders and checks. . . .

I have before me a statement by Mr. Joseph Moss, Director of Public Welfare of Cook County, which says:

"Conditions in Oak Forest are deplorable, and the feeble patients are washing one another's faces and hands. They have only five graduate nurses and 4,191 patients. According to the annual report of Cook County Commissioners, of whom Mr. Anton J. Cermak is chairman, of January 2, 1931."

Again Mr. Cermak breaks down and asks for an advisory committee of social welfare workers. Why does Cermak surround himself with so many advisory committees? Why is it necessary to surround Cermak with a guard of well-known citizens for every job he has? If he isn't competent to run the job, he should resign. If he cannot be trusted, he should be thrown out.

I have before me a letter written by an employee of the County Board, from which I quote:

"They used to joke about how Cermak always appointed Association of Commerce dudes to be on his project committees and he would say, 'Those guys don't know what it's all about. They want the honor. Let's give it to them. Call a hell of a lot of meetings, wear them out, and then we can do what we please with them fronting for us.'"

Maybe that throws a little light on Mr. Cermak's eagerness for citizens' advisory committees. . . .

**BASIS OF POLITICAL POWER**—The basis of Mr. Cermak's political power was the exploitation of organizations of foreign-born groups. In 1906, Cermak and the saloon keepers, brewers, and distillers, organized the United Societies and ruthlessly used these organizations of foreign extraction as a threat to coerce the Chicago City Council to allow a wide-open town and the Legislature of Illinois to enact laws favorable to saloons and breweries. Playing on the liberal ideals of those groups, he used them to defeat regulations of

saloons, gambling houses, dance halls, and the social evil. When his political power was safely established, he pushed the United Societies into the back room and called the bankers, big business boys, and social welfare workers into the front room and began to organize advisory boards to promote his political progress. Soon we may hear him announce the organization of the Allied Advisory Boards, substituting for the United Societies.

In 1912, Cermak fought and defeated an attempt in the City Council to increase police efficiency to better suppress crime.

I quote from an article by Professor Graham Taylor in the *Daily News* of December 28, 1912:

"Chicago needs nothing more during 1913 than the reorganization of its Police Department essentially along the lines laid down in this ordinance, and a superintendent capable of handling it. It ill becomes the representatives of the United Societies to oppose the ordinance on the ground that it provides for the enforcement of all laws pertaining to the city of Chicago and the people therein, for fear that the statutes regulating the sale of liquor might be enforced."

. . . Cermak secured the passage of a special permit ordinance permitting the sale of liquor in dance halls until 3 A.M., in direct contravention of the state law calling for 1 o'clock closing. These dance halls became so notorious that public-spirited citizens and large groups of women, including Jane Addams, Harriett Vittum, Mary

McDowell and Mrs. Charles E. Merriam, protested before council committees and called for protection. A report by investigators showed that two hundred thousand boys and girls nightly frequented the dance halls and estimated that twelve hundred girls were betrayed every night at dance halls. *The Chicago Tribune* went so far as to state that fourteen thousand girls were seduced every twenty-four hours. Opposing these prominent citizens and women was Mr. Anton J. Cermak, waving the club of the United Societies. . . .

## *Chapter Nine*

### SOME REJECTED LEADERS

IN ORDER to grasp the full significance of Tony's triumph, it must be borne in mind that the people of Chicago did not have as their only alternative men of the type of Crowe, Barrett, Litsinger, and Thompson. During the thirty years in which the people, by mounting majorities, were electing Tony to offices of ever-increasing importance in the city and county, they were with equal uniformity and decisiveness defeating men of intelligence, integrity, and courage—men who represented the best American traditions and the highest American ideals. Any adequate account of the men of this type who have been rejected would require a volume and would throw a flood of light on the shame of Chicago. Three typical instances will give us some idea of what such a book would be like:

#### *John J. Healy*

In 1904, John J. Healy was elected State's Attorney of Cook County by a majority of

75,000 votes. He was a man of unusual ability, learning, integrity, and courage. He was broad-minded and a man of excellent judgment and of great personal dignity and charm. For two years I was a member of his trial staff and had the opportunity daily of seeing him in action. He was at his office early and late and kept in close touch with the work of his assistants. Through the police and other sources, he learned who the criminals were, where they were, and what they were doing, and he pursued them with relentless determination. No criminal ever thought of approaching him except to plead guilty or to offer to assist the state. It never occurred to the crassest politician in Chicago to suggest to Healy that he play politics with his office or perform the most insignificant act of public betrayal. With the single exception of Charles S. Deneen, he was the greatest State's Attorney in Chicago's history. He was an excellent example of the type of public official which we must choose and sustain if our form of government is to endure.

Upon the expiration of his term in 1908, he entered the Republican primary as a candidate for renomination. In 1906 Tony had become head of the United Societies and the underworld had been organized for political

warfare. It demanded that Healy give a public pledge that, if elected, he would make no effort to enforce the law closing the saloons on Sunday. Sunday closing was merely the shibboleth of the underworld. It knew that any man who, as candidate for State's Attorney, would in advance of the election give a public pledge that he would not attempt to enforce a law which it was determined to break, would be unfit for the position. It knew that he would be a man of a type that could be trusted in all things.

Healy was not a total abstainer, a prohibitionist, a reformer, or an extremist of any kind. He knew that each act of opening a saloon on Sunday was a separate offense, that there were over 7,000 saloons in the city, that each defendant would be entitled to a jury trial and an appeal. He knew that this law could be enforced only by the Mayor exercising his power to revoke saloon licenses. Furthermore, he had brought sufficient number of prosecutions under the statute to convince everybody that its enforcement was beyond the power of the State's Attorney. He had no intention of attempting the impossible. He stated, however, that his self-respect would not permit him to agree not to enforce a particular law when, if elected, he would be



required to take an oath to enforce all the laws. He stated also that a situation might arise in which it would be clearly his duty to institute prosecution under this law and that he would go into office a free man or he would retire to private life. This attitude was highly unsatisfactory to the underworld.

It has been said that when a great occasion arises, a man is sure to appear who is equal to its demands. This occasion was no exception to the rule. John E. Wayman entered the primary as the protagonist of "personal liberty." As a member of the trial staff of the State's Attorney under both Deneen and Healy, I had seen Wayman in action for four years and I heard several of his primary speeches. He was a cheap, tricky shyster who hung around the Criminal Court Building defending criminals of all sorts and conditions. He charged into the political arena with the fury of an enraged bull and shouted defiance to all who would close the saloons on Sunday or interfere with personal liberty. As he warmed up to his subject, his voice would crack, the veins stand out on his forehead and the perspiration run down from his face and wilt his collar.

Surely this was a Daniel come to judgment! The organized underworld was thrown

into the Republican primary, Healy was defeated and Wayman became State's Attorney of Cook County. Immediately that great office became a farce and such it has remained to this day. Where criminals have not been able to use it, they have despised it because of its futility.

The paralysis of the State's Attorney's office was the first of a series of great under-world victories that finally landed its leader in the mayor's chair and Chicago in its present situation.

### *Charles E. Merriam*

Charles E. Merriam was professor of Political Science in the University of Chicago and a recognized authority on the subject of municipal government. In 1909 he was elected to the City Council and almost immediately took his place as the outstanding member of that body.

In the spring of 1911, a group of men who had joined the Progressive Republican movement, of whom I was one, requested Merriam to enter the Republican primary as a candidate for mayor, and he consented to do so. He ignored the machines and the bosses, went direct to the people, and after a spectacular campaign, was nominated, receiving more

votes than both his machine opponents combined. The underworld, the grafters, and the bosses were astounded. They had not thought such a result possible and had been caught napping. They at once got on the job to prevent such a catastrophe as his election.

The organized underworld, speaking through the United Societies, came forward and demanded that he give his pledge that, if elected, he would not close the saloons on Sunday. Merriam was a professor, but he was also a shrewd politician and he knew that half of the "good" people would put a cross in the Republican circle and the other half would put a cross in the Democratic circle, and that the underworld and the grafters would decide the result. He realized that he should give the required promise or save the time and money that would be required to go through the campaign. He therefore stated that he was for home rule and until that was granted, he would be content with the status quo. As home rule could not be obtained in a generation, that meant that if he was elected, the lid would remain off the caldron as it had always been. He had attempted to say "Shibboleth," but the underworld immediately detected the fact that he had pronounced it "Sibboleth." As he informs us:

My opponents were dumfounded and for the moment panic-stricken at my declaration that I personally favored a grant of home rule to Chicago, and until this was granted was content to preserve the status quo. Great consternation and frenzied cries that this could not be true and that I could not be trusted were heard on all sides.<sup>1</sup>

It may be added that his supporters were also dumfounded. But they realized that he was honest in the matter, and that it meant simply that he was willing to accept the office on these terms and accomplish as much as possible. They also knew that, if elected, he would appoint good men to office, destroy the alliance between politics and vice and crime, eliminate graft, introduce honesty and efficiency into every department of the city government, deal effectively with a multitude of municipal problems that were pressing for solution, inaugurate and carry through important public improvements that would make Chicago a more wholesome and beautiful city—that a man of intelligence, conscience, and public spirit would occupy the office of mayor.

The alternative was Carter H. Harrison.

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<sup>1</sup> Merriam, Charles Edward, *Chicago, a More Intimate View of Urban Politics*, p. 285. The Macmillan Company.

He had been four times mayor of Chicago, and it seemed that his early fight on Yerkes had exhausted his store of moral energy. In later years it used to be said that "Carter never stole a dollar but he dozed in his office while the underworld ran amuck and his friends stole everything in sight down to the door mats in the City Hall."

The choice, of course, was a simple one. The United Societies indorsed Harrison and under its effective leadership the organized underworld marched to the polls and voted for Harrison and Merriam was defeated. On that election day, April 4, 1911, Chicago threw away the greatest opportunity that has come to it in half a century. The movement which Merriam led collapsed and four years later, on April 6, 1915, William Hale Thompson was elected mayor. This was another of Tony's great achievements.

In 1913, Merriam returned to the City Council, and after four years of brilliant and invaluable service, he was defeated by a nondescript politician and retired to private life. Years later, speaking of his mayoralty campaign, he said:

If my managers had been thoughtful enough to produce some woman at the psychological mo-

ment, demanding that I take care of some bastard son, I should probably have been elected.<sup>2</sup>

After twenty-five years of experience in the political life of Chicago, this is the tribute which Professor Merriam pays to the intelligence and public spirit of her people!

*Charles S. Deneen* (1861-1945)

It has been pointed out that Charles S. Deeneen is a practical and resourceful politician and determined to survive. In a crisis he would not put forward a big man for an important office, because that might deprive him of the right to distribute the patronage to his followers and thus endanger his political machine, which was the foundation of his power. He would enter into temporary and permanent alliances with political spoilsmen when necessary to preserve himself and his organization from destruction. He did not pursue this course from choice, but because he found it necessary if he was to keep his head above the political waters of Chicago.

Whatever one may think of some of his political methods, it must not be forgotten that for years, in alliance with Victor F. Lawson, Deneen struggled to defeat dishonest men and

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 287.

to elect to office men who could be depended upon to perform their duties with ability and fidelity. Lawson was the editor of the independent and powerful *Daily News*, and he represented the highest ideals of journalism and citizenship. He was a giant among the Chicago journalists, and Deneen was a giant among Chicago politicians. For many years these men, in a spirit of true civic responsibility, stood at Chicago's gates and with the strength of Titans resisted the oncoming barbarian invasion.

Let us turn for a moment from the politician to the man and the public official. He was born in Illinois and graduated from McKendree College, of which institution his father was president. He is a man of exemplary personal habits, great physical strength and vigor and of impressive appearance. In character and intellect, he towers above all the men who have achieved conspicuous political success in Illinois in his generation.

In 1896, at the age of thirty-three, he was elected State's Attorney of Cook County and immediately established a reign of terror in Chicago's underworld that lasted during the eight years he was in office. With the utmost vigor, he went after criminals, big and little, and without compromise or delay sent them

to prison or the gallows. He was more powerful and effective than any lawyer that criminals could find to defend them. It was impossible for men of the type of Charlie Erbstein or Clarence Darrow, who have done so much to make Chicago safe for criminals, to get away with their stuff or make the State's Attorney's office ridiculous while he was at its head. He outmaneuvered them, exposed their tricks, exploded their sophistry, and made them appear like the men they really were. There is not the slightest doubt that he is entitled to rank with Joseph W. Folk and other great public prosecutors of American history.

From 1905 to 1913, he was governor of Illinois. His administration of that office was marked by honesty, economy, efficiency, and dignity. He was the ablest governor that Illinois has had since the Civil War.

In 1925, he was elected to the Senate of the United States. He did not play to the gallery or seek publicity, but entered upon the performance of the duties of his office with ability, sincerity, and dignity. Once more the citizen of Illinois, visiting Washington, felt that pride in his state that he had experienced in the days of Lyman Trumbull.

As has already been pointed out, since the



triumph of Tammany, a political leader of the type of Deneen had become an anachronism in Chicago and Illinois. Tony, Big Bill, and the underworld united to defeat him and put in his place a fop and Tammany mouth-piece who would fit perfectly into the new picture.

## *Chapter Ten*

### THE NEW ERA

AS A new era opens, the skies are heavily overcast. There are many, of course, who are lustily and thoughtlessly following the advice of Big Bill the Builder: "Throw away your hammer and take a horn." There are others who are sincerely and thoughtfully struggling to find valid grounds for optimism and hope. But many of the best and bravest citizens of Chicago and Illinois face the future with feelings of despair. They have fought to improve conditions and have seen them grow steadily worse until the situation seems completely out of hand.

The citizen who is acquainted with the facts and able to rise above all forms of wishful thinking and face conditions with candor and realism, finds hope difficult and optimism impossible.

#### *The White Flag*

If "the very best people," "the prominent men and women" and "the leading citizens" of Chicago were ablaze with indignation, were

spending their time and money organizing the voters by blocks, precincts, and wards for uncompromising warfare upon the gangsters and grafters, it would be only a question of time when her Augean stables would be cleansed. If these people were even sitting in sackcloth and ashes, there would be ground for hope. The fact is, however, that Tony has "licked them and is making them like it."

It must, of course, be realized that large numbers of these leading citizens are beneficiaries of this corrupt political system and for this reason are its apologists. They want their taxes fixed; they want public contracts, franchises, and deposits of public funds; they want the privilege of disobeying laws and ordinances regulating the use of property; they want access to judges who are to pass upon matters in which they are interested, and they want other forms of unlawful recognition and privilege. These "leading citizens" supported William Hale Thompson and his machine, and for the same reason they are now supporting Tony and his machine.

There are also many intelligent and unselfish "good citizens" who believe that Tony is in to stay and they might as well make the best of it. They sincerely believe that they can accomplish more for the city by praising

him and coöperating with him than by condemning him and fighting him. They realize that this attitude will help to intrench him and his machine in power, but it all seems so hopeless that they don't know what else to do.

It is easy to identify these two types of "leading citizens." With an air of complacency one will say: "All this talk about Chicago is pure sensationalism. Chicago is no worse than any other city. Cermak is a good mayor." You know at once that that man has some connection with the system; that he is getting something out of politics that can be had only when a man of the type of Tony is in power.

Another will say: "Yes, things are pretty bad, but Chicago is fundamentally sound and, after all, the world is not coming to an end." If you ask him about Tony, he will endeavor to appear unconcerned and say: "It is true that Tony came up by a devious path, but he is trying now to do a good job." You know at once that this is a good citizen who does not want the trouble of a long disagreeable fight or believes that it would be useless and is endeavoring to make the best of it. He has decided to "take it lying down."

It often happens that a man whose course of conduct has been productive of human

wreckage likes to do something for the victims. It may appease his conscience and quench public wrath. It may even enable him to pass in the disguise of a philanthropist. The old gray wolves of the Chicago City Council used to distribute turkeys at Christmas time, provide funerals for the poor, and engage in other forms of charity. Al Capone established soup kitchens and fed 2,500 people every day.

Tony has not become famous for any such use of his own money, but as president of the County Board he was very generous in the use of county funds for charitable purposes. It did not cost him anything; it involved no danger to his machine, and it put him in the good graces of people who could provide him a fine line of publicity. When, therefore, the splendid men and women who were engaged in social service work went to his office, he told them to come right in and sit down and said, "Write your own ticket."

It is but natural that these good people, eager to carry through their program of social service, should be grateful to Tony for his coöperation. It is also natural, perhaps, that in their preoccupation with their special tasks, they should overlook the fact that if it were not for the vast system of organized

vice, graft, political corruption, and public betrayal of which Tony is the arch representative, many of the objects of their charity would be honest, independent, and self-respecting people. Be that as it may, one often meets a social worker who says: "I don't approve of this wholesale condemnation of Cermak. As president of the County Board, he helped put through a fine program of social service."

It has been pointed out that Tammany leaders have always been too astute to slap the public in the face after the manner of Thompson and Crowe. They put "angel faces" in their show windows. They consulted leading citizens, appointed them on committees, permitted them to busy themselves with public matters and secure desirable publicity. There was one condition, however, that was strictly enforced. These leading citizens must not expect to go behind the Tammany walls where the real work of government was being carried on. Their function was to divert public attention, and they must perform on a platform erected outside the gates where the public could look on and applaud. In the Tammany strategy manuals, this was known as "highbrows fronting for us." This work was handled

with the same consummate skill that marked Tammany's management of its precinct captains, ward committeemen, and election workers.

We have seen that Tony's predecessor, George Brennan, was a master of this form of strategy. At one and the same time, he could get away with murder, pose as a benevolent boss, and cause good citizens to break forth into song. Tony has demonstrated the fact that he also is a past master of this type of strategy.

Our story may well be brought to a close with an account of Tony's most brilliant exploit in this field. Those who come in contact with Chicago's leading citizens know that many of them are singing this refrain: "Notwithstanding Tony's past, as mayor he is trying to do a good job." Thereby hangs a tale. As all the world knows, when Tony was elected mayor, Chicago was in desperate financial straits. Something had to be done, and, of course, everybody looked to the mayor. No one will question the fact that Tony sincerely desired to find a way out for the city, that he realized that his type of ability and experience had not equipped him to deal successfully with the kind of problems that confronted him and that he desired to

secure the best help available. But this was not all. He also wanted to shift responsibility for results and particularly when patriotic citizens were struggling to meet a great emergency, he wanted to make them "front" for him while he completed his stranglehold on Chicago and Cook County.

The most powerful instrument of political coercion and blackmail that can be put into the hands of a political boss is the machinery of taxation. Prior to the mayoralty election, the Better Government Association pointed out that efforts were being made at Springfield to give Tony full power over the Board of Review as well as the Board of Assessors.<sup>1</sup>

When as mayor it became necessary for him to deal with the financial emergency, he called in leading citizens and after many conferences, the following solution emerged: Request the governor to call a special session of the legislature and secure the passage of a law abolishing the Board of Assessors and the Board of Review and lodging all the powers of taxation in the hands of three men. As the voters were busy with other matters, they were not to be called upon to elect these new officials. A much simpler method of selection

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 176 *supra*.



was devised—the method of appointment. Let the County Board appoint one and the Governor another and let the two so appointed select the third. As Tony controlled the County Board and was planning to put one of his satellites in the Governor's chair, this promised a most satisfactory result for him however it might work for the city and county. It might be necessary in the beginning to put high-grade men in one or more of these positions until the public had turned its attention to something else. But this was something that time and the indifference of the people would take care of. And Tammany's thoughts are long thoughts. As Tony was entirely confident that by 1934 every public official in Cook County whether elected or appointed would hold his position by permission of Tammany, it was provided that beginning with that year these tax officials should be elected.

When this scheme was launched, one of Chicago's leading lawyers and one of its most loyal and highly respected citizens commented on the situation as follows:

Of course what we really ought to have in this state is a constitutional amendment which will permit the enactment of an entire new statute

with respect to taxes. Every tax-spending body is practically out of funds, the closing of the schools is threatened, a special session of the Legislature has been called and is in session considering proposed amendments to the existing statutes which will afford relief and this furnishes a fine opportunity of jamming through some half-baked legislation which will really not meet the situation but will temporarily make funds available at least. Incidentally it affords Tony Cermak an excellent opportunity to get legislation which will tighten the hold which his organization has on public affairs. It is proposed to wipe out the Board of Assessors and Board of Review as provided for under our existing statutes and to provide that there shall be two reviewers; one to be appointed by the Governor and the other by the president of the county board, and that these two shall select a single assessor. From the present viewpoint, politically, it would seem quite likely that the next Governor of Illinois will be a Democrat. Several have been mentioned—all of them members of Tony's organization. Of course he will control the county board which would mean that he would have control of all the tax-levying machinery of the county through the assessor and the two reviewers.

In this crisis Tony is very cleverly carrying out the plans which he was taught so well by his predecessors, namely, to have a lot of prominent citizens of excellent reputation "front" for him, and at the present time the leading merchants along State Street and the leading bankers are urging

the Legislature to act and are appearing before its committees to sponsor the plan which I mentioned. Indeed, it is called the Kelly plan, Kelly being the President of the Fair. And Tony is very skillfully playing the part of the shrinking violet and bowing himself to the rear with the statement that he is open-minded and willing to accept any plan but that above all things, politics must adjourn for the time being and notwithstanding the fact that his party has large patronage, particularly in the Board of Assessors and also some in the Board of Review, he is willing to sacrifice all that in order that immediate relief may be forthcoming. Even the press is singing his praises.

This is an excellent illustration of Tony in the act of doing a good job.

It is difficult to understand why some of the "intelligent people" and "prominent citizens" of Chicago are taken in by the window dressing, the grandstand plays, and the hypocrisy of a political boss of the type and antecedents of Cermak. It seems incredible that they should not realize that the city's financial plight is the direct result of the system of graft and political corruption of which he is the arch representative; that it was he and his associates who organized the forces of vice and greed for political action and drove decent and competent men from the

leadership of both parties and delivered the Republican Party and the city over to Thompson and his gang. But the aspect of the matter which is most sinister and most portentous for Chicago and democracy in America is that their belief that he is doing the best he can to solve the city's financial problem should completely blind them to the moral significance of the fact that Cermak and his machine are the rulers of Chicago.

## *Chapter Eleven*

### CONCLUSION

IF ONE is to understand Chicago as a local, state, and national problem and as a phenomenon of western civilization, he must have the intelligence to ascertain and the courage to face the following facts:

The "good people" of Chicago are blind, apathetic, divided, and feeble. The forces of vice, lawlessness, and greed are alert, determined, organized, and militant. Chicago has lost its pride, its fighting spirit, and its self-respect. It no longer represents the things that are symbolized by the word "American." Cermak's triumph was not the accident of a single campaign, but the culmination of thirty years of relentless and victorious warfare. His power does not rest on the shifting sands of politics but upon the most minute, thorough, and effective organization of the forces of greed and depravity that has been achieved in any American city. As Cermak, at the head of the eager and victorious hosts of paganism, moves on irresistibly to the conquest of Illinois and perfects his alliances

with the Tammany chiefs of other cities for the capture of Washington, it becomes more and more evident that he is one of the most resourceful and effective political leaders that has yet appeared in this country. As he advances, he conquers every inch of ground, consolidates his positions and renders dangerous attacks from the rear impossible. Only a moral revolution can save Chicago and until that happens not only in Chicago but in other cities as well, only eternal vigilance on the part of all the people can preserve American institutions from the menace of the city.











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